

II SAMUEL

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J. H. WADE, M.A.

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II SAMUEL

(Revised Version)

WITH INTRODUCTION, MAPS AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES ESPECIALLY
INTENDED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS
AND THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

BY

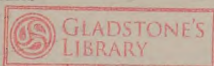
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II Sam. xxiii. 1.

PREFACE.

The principal objects of every commentary on an ancient historical work must be (1) the criticism, and, where needful, the correction, of the text; (2) the elucidation of the subject-matter; (3) an estimate of its historic value. But in the case of one of the books of the Old Testament, two others are desirable: (4) a comparison of the religious beliefs and practices presented in it with those prevailing both contemporaneously among neighbouring peoples, and subsequently among the Hebrews themselves; (5) a consideration of its religious worth for our own time in the light of the more developed moral and spiritual teaching imparted by the later Hebrew prophets and especially by our Lord. These various aims in connection with *II. Samuel* we have sought to achieve partly in the Introduction and partly in the Notes. In the preparation of the volume we have constantly used the commentaries on the book by Driver (1890), H. P. Smith (1899), Kennedy (*n.d.*) and Kirkpatrick (1894); we have consulted G. A. Smith's works on the *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1895) and on *Jerusalem* (1907), W. R. Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1892) and *The Religion of the Semites* (1894), Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (1898-1904), and Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopædia Biblica* (1899-1903); whilst our occasional indebtedness to other writers will be evident from the acknowledgments occurring in the footnotes. For the Septuagint, recourse has been had to Swete's edition (1895); and, for the readings of Lucian and the other Greek versions, to Field's *Origines Hexaplorum quæ supersunt* (1875). The attempt to carry out, within a limited space, the several purposes which we have proposed to ourselves has proved very difficult, and we feel no confidence that we have succeeded; but we have at least done our best to render the book not unworthy of the series in which it appears.

We have been enabled to print the text of the Revised Version through the kind permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The chief responsibility for the volume rests with the editor whose name appears first on the title-page; but he has received great help from his brother, whose contributions have been both considerable in extent and important in character. He has also been aided by his wife, who has spent much care upon the proofs,

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ABBREVIATIONS.

(a) *In connexion with Modern Works.*

- Driver, LOT . . S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891).
- „ Deut.or Dt. The same author's *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (1895).
- „ Notes . . The same author's *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (1890).
- „ Gen. . . The same author's *The Book of Genesis* (1903).
- „ Par. Ps. . The same author's *Parallel Psalter . . . with an Introduction and Glossaries* (1898).
- W. R. Smith, OTJC. . W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (2nd ed. 1892).
- „ RS. . . The same author's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1894).
- „ Kinship. . The same author's *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885).
- H. P. Smith, Sam. . . H. P. Smith's *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (1899).
- G. A. Smith, HG. . . Sir G. A. Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1895).
- „ Jerusalem. The same author's *Jerusalem, The Topography, Economics and History from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70* (1907).
- Hastings, DB. . . J. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (1898-1902).
- Enc. Bib. or E. Bi . . Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopædia Biblica* (1899-1900).

(b) *In connexion with Textual Authorities.*

- LXX. = The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the O.T. made in Egypt between the third and the first centuries B.C.
- LXX. A = The Alexandrine manuscript of the LXX. preserved in the British Museum, and containing the whole Bible except certain portions which have been accidentally lost. It probably dates from the first half of the fifth cent. A.D.
- LXX. B = The Vatican manuscript of the LXX. preserved at Rome, and containing the whole Bible, with a few omissions through accidental loss. It probably dates from the fourth century A.D.

II SAMUEL.

LXX. Luc. = A revision of the *LXX.* produced in the course of the third century A.D. by Lucian of Samosata, who was martyred in 311 A.D.

Aq. = Aquila
Sym. = Symmachus
Th. = Theodotion

} Authors of three revised translations of the O.T. into Greek, made in the second century A.D. but now existing only in fragments.

O.L. = The Old Latin version, made in N. Africa in the second century A.D.; known chiefly through quotations in the Latin Fathers.

Vulg. = The Vulgate, a Latin translation of the Bible made by St. Jerome and completed in 405 A.D.

Syr. = The Syriac version of the O.T., probably produced in the second or third century A.D.

Targ. = The Targum, a translation or interpretation of the O.T. into Aramaic, produced at different times, for the use of Jews residing in Palestine and Babylonia after Hebrew had ceased to be current among them.

Heb. text. = The Hebrew consonantal text (with the appropriate vowels supplied mentally) which appears in the printed copies of the Hebrew Bible.

Heb. mg. = The corrections of the consonantal text introduced into the margin of the Hebrew Bible by the Massoretes, who placed the vowels required by the correction under the consonants of the reading preserved in the text.

A.V. = The Authorized Version of the Bible, published in 1611.

R.V. = The Revised Version, published in 1885.

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH for Christian believers the New Testament is of higher value than the Old Testament, yet the latter has an interest and importance of its own. Even as a source of religious instruction it is not superseded, for by placing emphasis upon the prudential virtues and the discharge of national and civic duties, it supplies an element which in the N.T. (in consequence partly of the circumstances of the times, and partly of the social position of those whose teaching it conveys) is either absent altogether or does not receive much attention. But it is of still greater moment as a history of the Hebrew people before and almost up to the Christian era, since it to a great extent explains how both the external conditions and the internal beliefs and hopes prevailing in Palestine at the time of our Lord and His Apostles came to be. Moreover, the Historical books comprised in it throw light on the methods of writing history followed by Jewish authors, the aims which they had in view, and the presuppositions wherewith they approached their task; and so promote a more judicious estimate of the value of the historical writings of the N.T., which were composed likewise by men trained in Jewish habits of thought. And since the O.T. exists not only in the original Hebrew, but also in various translations made at a date prior to the earliest surviving Hebrew MSS., the variations of these authorities from the text raise interesting problems of Textual Criticism. The study of the O.T. is thus many-sided; and it is among the purposes of this Introduction to show how the *Second Book of Samuel* contributes to the elucidation of the various subjects mentioned, which will be most conveniently considered in an order, for the most part, the reverse of that in which they have been here enumerated.

I.

The Textual Criticism of II Samuel.

Hebrew MSS.

The first requisite for the profitable study of books of which the original MSS. long ago perished is the settlement of their text. The aim of textual criticism is the recovery, so far as may be, of the original words of the writers of the books concerned, wherever the reading may be suspected of being corrupt. This process is

generally begun by a comparison of the existing MSS., with a view to determining which of several variant readings is the one which the author is likely to have written. In the case of the O.T., however, the variations in the surviving Hebrew MSS. are comparatively slight, since from about the third century A.D. great care has been taken to transmit with accuracy the text which was then in existence. The text which we have now is virtually the same as that used by Aquila, a Jewish proselyte of Pontus, who rendered the O.T. into Greek early in the second century A.D. It may therefore be concluded with considerable confidence that the Hebrew MSS. remaining (the oldest to which a trustworthy date can be assigned being not earlier than the tenth century A.D.)¹ preserve a text which was current not long after the time of our Lord.² Nevertheless, a considerable interval separates this date from that of the original writers, so that there was ample opportunity for corruption to occur before precautions were taken against it. Indeed, it is tolerably certain that the care exercised in preserving the text since the third century secured the perpetuation of numerous errors. The ordinary chances of corruption in the previous period must have been increased by the fact that during this interval the earliest Hebrew characters (which in many respects resembled Greek capitals,³ with the horizontal strokes drawn the reverse way) had been converted into those used in modern Hebrew Bibles. Under these circumstances it becomes necessary to consider the evidence afforded by such translations from the Hebrew as were made before the Christian era; and, in order to appreciate the nature of this, it is desirable to say a little about the peculiarities of the Hebrew language and the Hebrew alphabet.

The Hebrew Language.

The Hebrew language in which all the canonical books of the O.T. are written⁴ is a branch of the Semitic family of languages. If taken to include the closely allied Phœnician and Moabite dialects, it may be described as having been spoken in Canaan and Phœnicia; whilst other branches of the same linguistic stock were in use in Syria (called in Hebrew, *Aram*), in Arabia, and in the countries around the Euphrates and the Tigris (Babylonia and Assyria). The name *Semitic* is derived from the genealogy contained in *Gen. x. 21 f.*, where, among the descendants of Shem, are included *Eber*, *Asshur*, and *Aram*, who can be regarded respectively as the eponymous ancestors of the Hebrews, the Assyrians, and the Arameans (or Syrians). In the corresponding

¹ This is a copy of the Prophets at Petrograd, written in 916 A.D., most Hebrew MSS. being at least three centuries later.

² See Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 36.

³ The Greek Alphabet was really derived from the Phœnician, which was the same as the early Hebrew.

⁴ Portions of a few books (*Ezra*, *Daniel*) are written in Aramaic, the dialect which gradually superseded Hebrew after the Exile.

INTRODUCTION

genealogy, however, which is given in *Gen.* x. 6 f., *Canaan*, the eponym of the Canaanites, and *Sheba*, standing for an Arabian people, are represented as descendants of Ham, so that, although both the Canaanites and the Arabians spoke languages cognate with those of the peoples whose descent is traced to Shem, the term *Semitic* is not strictly appropriate to them.

The Hebrew Alphabet.

Among the most distinctive features of the Semitic tongues are the facts that all the letters are consonants, that almost all the word-stems consist of three letters only, and that modifications of the meanings of the stems are indicated less by suffixes (as in Latin and Greek, which belong to another family of speech, the Indo-European) than by vowel changes within the consonantal framework. Thus the stem or root which means "to slay" is represented by the three consonants H R G; and what Latin expresses by *nec-a-t*, *nec-a-n(t)s*, and *nec-a-tus* is expressed in Hebrew by *HāRaG*, *HōRēG*, and *HāRūG*. The Hebrew alphabet, in the form which the letters have had for nearly 2,000 years, and with their names and equivalents, is as follows:—

<i>Form.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Equivalent.</i>
א	Aleph	a peculiar guttural
ב	Beth	b, bh
ג	Gimel	g, gh
ד	Daleth	d, dh
ה	Hē	h
ו	Waw	w
ז	Zayin	z
ח	Khêth (Heth)	a strong guttural, kh (h)
ט	Têth (Teth)	t (ṭ)
י	Yôd	y
כ, final ך	Kaph	c, ch
ל	Lamed	l
מ, final ם	Mēm	m
נ, final ן	Nûn	n
ס	Samech	s
ע	Ayin	a peculiar guttural
פ, final ף	Pē	p, ph
צ, final ץ	Tsāde (Sade)	ts (s)

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<i>Form.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Equivalent.</i>
ק	Qôph	k (q)
ר	Rêsh	r
{ ש	Sin	s
{ ש	Shin	sh (š)
ת	Taw	t, th

All these letters, as stated previously, are consonants, and when combined into words and sentences are read from right to left, not from left to right, as in English and many other languages. It will be observed that several letters closely resemble one another, being distinguished only by small horn-like projections. These are the *קפאים* or "tittles" to which our Lord alluded in *Matt* v. 18. Letters between which there is so little distinction are extremely liable to be mistaken for one another; and such mistakes are a fertile source of variant readings. The letters that are most readily confused are ד and ר, ב and נ, ו and י, מ (ם) and ס, ה and ח, ג and מ, ל and נ, ו and ד, נ and נ. The vowels, when indicated, are marked by small points, placed either below or above the consonants. But such points were not inserted in early writing, the vowels accompanying the written consonants being mentally supplied by the reader. Thus the three Hebrew words cited above, if transliterated into English, might all be written HRG; and in deciding what vowels had to be pronounced in connection with some or all of the consonants, the reader would have to be guided by the context or by tradition. It is clear, however, that the context would not always be a trustworthy guide to the vowels intended by the original writer, since in many passages different vowels might equally make sense, whilst oral tradition is dependent upon fallible memories. The vowels inserted in modern Hebrew Bibles represent the pronunciation, as orally transmitted, which prevailed about the beginning of the Christian era. They were introduced in the seventh century A.D. by a body of Hebrew scholars (called *Massoretes*) in accordance with the tradition (*Massōrah*) which they had received. By this time the *consonantal* text of the O.T. had come to be regarded as sacred, so that they did not venture to alter what was written, even where they believed it to be erroneous or defective; but they indicated in the margin the consonants which they considered ought to be substituted for, or added to, those in the text, and they placed under the latter the vowel points which belonged to the correction. The consonants which were left standing in the text were then called the *C'thib* (or "written"), whilst those which were intended to replace them

were termed the *Q'ri* (or "read"). This is the explanation of the *Other Readings* which are noted in the margin of the R.V. in 11 *Samuel* and elsewhere (see v. 8, viii. 3, xii. 24, xiii. 37, xiv. 21, 22, xv. 28, etc.). Thus in the last instance (xv. 28), where the text has *the fords of the wilderness*, the Massoretes have transposed one consonant and inserted in the margin the correction *the plains of the wilderness*. Again, in viii. 3 the written text has merely *the River*, but the Massoretes have placed in the margin the consonants of the Hebrew word for *Euphrates*, *PěRāTh*, and inserted in the text after the word *River* the vowels *ě* and *ā*, in order to show that, in reading, the word *River* should be followed by *Euphrates*. The English Revisers, however, have not noted all the differences between the "written" and the "read" text. For instance, in xii. 31 the written text has a word represented by the four consonants *MLCN*, from which no sense can be extracted. The Massoretes have taken this to be an error for *MLBN* (the Hebrew letters for B and C being easily confused, p. 4), which, printed *MaLBēN*, means a "brick-kiln" or "brick-mould," so they have written *MLBN* in the margin and placed the vowels *a* and *ē* under the text-letters *MLCN*.

It is only in a very small proportion of cases that the varieties of reading noted by the Massoretes make any important difference to the sense; nor do the variants favoured by the Massoretes always commend themselves to modern scholars. In numerous passages, too, where the Hebrew, through defect or some other cause, yields no sense (see viii. 18 mg.), no variant is given in the *Q'ri*, a fact which shows that little real criticism has been exercised upon the text since the time when, after the Fall of Jerusalem, it became the object of diligent care. Probably both materials for textual criticism (in the modern sense) and skill to use them were equally lacking. The real object of the Massoretes was to preserve, not to correct, the text transmitted to them. But as has been seen, there was ample room for textual corruption to occur before the Massoretes began their labours. There is no security that either the written consonants which they safeguarded or the vowel points which they introduced reflect accurately the text or the pronunciation which prevailed *before* the Christian era; and it is with a view to obtaining light upon this that it is expedient to compare the Hebrew with a translation made of it two or three centuries prior to the birth of our Lord, and earlier than any other rendering of the Scriptures.

The Septuagint Version.

This translation is a Greek version of the O.T. made in Egypt in the time of the Ptolemies for the benefit of the Jews who were resident there, and who, being settled in the midst of a Greek-speaking population, had grown accustomed to that language, and

had forgotten their ancestral tongue. It is from this translation that most of the quotations from the O.T. occurring in the N.T. are derived. It received the name *Septuagint*, and is denoted by the symbol LXX., from a legend that six men out of every tribe of Israel were invited from Jerusalem to Alexandria by Ptolemy II. (reigning from 285 to 246 B.C.), and engaged by him to render into Greek their sacred Scriptures, that they might be added to the royal library; and that the 72, who were sumptuously entertained by the king, produced a translation in 72 days (Jos., *Ant.* xii. 2). The story, as related by Josephus, contains some obvious improbabilities; and the fact that different sections of the LXX. vary greatly in merit, proves that the separate parts of it proceeded from different hands and were probably produced at different periods to meet the needs of the Jews in the Greek-speaking world. The best rendering is that of the Pentateuch, which was undertaken first under Ptolemy II. (Philadelphus). The other divisions of the O.T., the renderings of which were completed prior to 130 B.C. (since reference is made to them in *Ecclus.*, which was translated by that date),¹ are much less successfully handled, especially in the case of *Isaiah* and *Job*. The oldest MSS. of the LXX. are some 500 years earlier in date than the oldest Hebrew MSS. now existing; and unlike the latter, they present many variations of text. Being sundered, in spite of their comparatively early date, from the original MSS. of the translators by a long period, it is inevitable that they should contain numerous accidental errors. But the mistakes occurring in them are not likely, in general, to coincide with those suspected to exist in our Hebrew MSS., so that a comparison between the two makes it possible, in many passages where the Hebrew and Greek texts diverge, to determine which is most likely to represent what the original authors wrote. For although the LXX. is in many respects a very poor translation, yet, inasmuch as it is generally very literal, often reproducing Hebrew idioms instead of using their Greek equivalents, and even, in some cases, transliterating Hebrew words which were not understood, it can often be inferred what the Hebrew text was which the translators had before them; and since this goes back to the second or third century B.C., we are enabled to see where the present Hebrew text of the first century A.D. preserves correctly a text of earlier date, and where it has probably been corrupted.

Sources of Error and their Correction.

It is not, indeed, true that all variations between the Greek and the Hebrew imply differences of reading. Many of the

¹ An incidental proof that the Book of *Samuel* was translated into Greek prior to the composition of *Ecclesiasticus* is found in *Ecclus.* xlv. 19, where the words *so much as a shoe* allude to the LXX. rendering of I *Sam.* xii. 3, which differs from the Hebrew.

textual variants arise from accidental mistakes of copyists (errors of transcription), and some are due to differences of idiom between the two languages; whilst a certain number have been deliberately introduced with the purpose of making a passage more lucid, or otherwise improving it. For the sake of clearness, or some similar reason, words or even whole clauses, have occasionally been added to the original to supply what was deemed defective. In some cases, too, where the Greek and the Hebrew differ, both make good sense, so that it is impossible to decide with confidence which has the best claim to originality. Nevertheless, after allowance has been made for divergence due either to translators or copyists, there is enough evidence to prove incontestably that in various passages the LXX. has been made from a Hebrew text differing from the Hebrew which we possess, and that the latter is less original than that which underlies the Greek translation. Some of the errors in the present Hebrew text, which a comparison of it with the LXX. enables us to discover, affect the consonants (these, as has been said, being the only *letters*), and so are familiar to textual critics of other literatures. Such are (1) confusion of letters or words similar in form,¹ (2) transposition of letters, (3) wrong division of adjacent words, (4) omission of letters or syllables (owing to their resemblance to adjoining syllables)² or of a whole passage (owing to the likeness between its beginning or conclusion and those of an adjoining passage),³ (5) repetition of like syllables or words,⁴ (6) insertion in the wrong place of accidental omissions supplied in the margin, (7) incorporation of marginal glosses, in connexion sometimes with the right, at other times with the wrong, passage, (8) misunderstanding of abbreviations. But a certain number are peculiar to Hebrew and other languages in which the vowels are frequently not expressed in writing. Thus the LXX. translation may imply the same consonants as our Hebrew text, but different vowels, and so may witness to an earlier tradition respecting the pronunciation than that represented by the *pointing* of the present Hebrew text. In some instances, again, the LXX. offers a combination of alternative renderings, due to an attempt to take account of variant readings in the Hebrew MSS. used.⁵ In such cases one of the renderings generally corresponds to the present Hebrew text, whilst the other represents a different and earlier text.

Conjectural Emendations.

It is not, of course, always possible to trace the differences subsisting between the LXX. and the Hebrew to one or other of

¹ The MSS. used by the LXX. translators were probably written in an early variety of the Hebrew square character (see Driver, *Notes*, p. lxxv).

² Haplography. ³ Homœoteleuton. ⁴ Dittography. ⁵ Conflation (see vi. 1, note

the sources of corruption just enumerated. There are numerous cases where the variation cannot be explained by accidental error, and where, if there has been deliberate alteration, the motive is not discernible. In such instances, all that can be done is to choose the reading which best suits the sense of the passage, and which must therefore be assumed to be that which the author most probably wrote. In some passages, indeed, where neither the Greek nor the Hebrew yields a satisfactory meaning, recourse has to be had to conjectural emendation. But emendations based only on *intrinsic* probability without *transcriptional* probability can never be so convincing as emendations that offer some explanation of how the corruptions which it is sought to remove arose.

MSS. of the Septuagint.

It must not be supposed that the copies of the LXX. which we possess bear unanimous witness to the Hebrew text which lies behind it. On the contrary, they themselves, when compared together, present numerous variations, and were probably derived from variant Hebrew MSS. The existing MSS. of the LXX. are partly Uncial¹ and partly Cursive² (or Minuscule), the date of the former ranging from the fourth century to the ninth A.D., and of the latter from the ninth century to the invention of printing.³ Uncial MSS. are generally indicated by capital letters (Hebrew, Greek, or English), Cursive MSS. by numbers. The four most important of the Uncials once contained the whole of the Bible, but they are all now more or less defective, and two of the four do not contain II Sam., so that in a commentary on that book these may be ignored, and it will suffice to mention the only two which include it, and to which reference will be made in the course of the following pages. These are the *Codex Alexandrinus* (A), dating from the fifth century and preserved in the British Museum, and the *Codex Vaticanus* (B), written in the fourth century and preserved in the Vatican Library at Rome.⁴ Of these B probably represents most nearly the authentic Greek text. A is, in general, much nearer to the existing Hebrew text than B, and seems to have been revised by reference to it. For the purposes of textual criticism considerable importance attaches also to a revised edition of the LXX. produced about the end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth, century A.D., by Lucian of Samosata (in Asia Minor).⁵ The text of this edition is preserved in one Uncial MS. (existing in two parts, indicated separately by N and V), and in several Cursives. The Cursives, however, which contain a Lucianic text, are not the same in all parts of the Old

¹ *i.e.*, written in rounded capitals.

² *i.e.*, written in a running hand.

³ Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 59.

⁴ From this MS. a few verses of II Sam. ii. are missing.

⁵ He suffered martyrdom in 312 A.D.

Testament. For the historical books, including *Samuel*, the authoritative manuscripts are 19, 82, 93, 108 and 118; and where the readings of this group are cited in the commentary, they are indicated by the symbol LXX. *Luc.*

Later Greek Versions.

Mention may be made here of three other Greek translations which were produced in Christian times. One was the work of *Aquila* (p. 2), intended for Jews, which kept very close to the Hebrew original; a second was by *Theodotion*, of Ephesus, who was possibly a Christian, and whose rendering was free; and a third was by *Symmachus*, an Ebionite, which was the best in quality and style. All these were made from a text substantially the same as that which we now possess, and so are of little value for critical purposes, though they throw light upon the meanings of obscure words. They exist only in fragments.

Versions in other Languages.

The Old Testament was translated at an early date into other languages besides Greek. Only two of these translations need be noticed here. One is the *Latin* version. This exists in two forms: (a) the *Old Latin*, made in the second century A.D. from the Greek (and so a translation of a translation), and surviving in a fragmentary condition in certain MSS. and in quotations occurring in various Latin Fathers, such as Tertullian and Cyprian;¹ (b) the *Vulgate*, produced at the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth by St. Jerome, and consisting partly of a revision of the old Latin, and partly of a new translation prepared from the Hebrew. In the Vulgate the Books of *Samuel* (which, with *Kings*, were the first issued) are among the translations made anew from the Hebrew. The other version is the *Syriac*, which was produced in the second or third century from the Hebrew. For the textual criticism of II *Sam.* neither this version nor St. Jerome's is as valuable as the LXX., since they were both formed from a Hebrew text differing little from that of the present day. Besides these translations of the Old Testament, there exist also certain paraphrases called *Targums*, written in the Aramaic language in order to explain the Old Testament writings to the Jewish people when acquaintance with Hebrew was disappearing from among them. The Targum which includes the Books of *Samuel* is that of Jonathan ben-Uzzel, which received its final form in the fifth century A.D.

The Text of Samuel.

It has seemed desirable to give here this brief account of some of the versions of the Old Testament, especially the LXX., because

¹ The MSS. used in making the Old Latin version resembled those employed by Lucian (see Driver, *Notes*, p. lxxvii).

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the Hebrew text of the Books of *Samuel* is exceptionally corrupt; and it is the versions that supply the most effective aid for its emendation. It has been suggested that the bad state of the text in these books is due to the fact that they had little place in the services of the synagogue, but were chiefly read in private; and that there was thus less security against the multiplication of errors in them than would have been the case if they had been used in public worship, where the best copies procurable were employed.¹ The variations from the Hebrew presented by the LXX. in *Samuel* are very numerous, and affect not only isolated words but whole clauses and sentences. The R.V., like the A.V., adheres almost uniformly to the Hebrew text, even where it makes little sense. But though this policy was deliberately adopted by the Revisers,² they were fully aware that in many places the LXX. and other translations imply a preferable text; and in the margin of the R.V. several allusions occur to the readings of the ancient versions. The importance of these has since been increasingly recognized; and in the present commentary attention is repeatedly drawn to them. It is frequently, though not always, possible to infer how they have arisen; and in many instances this can be made intelligible through the medium of an English rendering. But even when the variants have originated simply from a confusion between similar Hebrew letters, a reference to the Hebrew alphabet, which has been printed on a preceding page, will enable those readers who are not Hebrew scholars to appreciate the cause that has led to the results observed. It must, of course, be understood that the long intervals separating the age that saw the original production of the book, first, from the date of the LXX. translation, next, from the existing MSS. of the LXX., and, thirdly, from the existing Hebrew MSS., preclude any hope of the successful removal of *all* errors. The recovery of the original text can only be approximate.

II.

Title of the Book.

The Title and Divisions of the Book.

The work that goes by the name of *Samuel* was originally a single book, and was divided into two books (as were also *Kings* and *Chronicles*) by the authors of the LXX., who probably used for writing rolls of a conventional size, and found that it would require two. By them the two books were styled *the First* and *Second Books of the Kingdoms*, the corresponding two divisions of

¹ W. R. Smith, *OTJC*, p. 84.

² See the preface to the R.V.

the work that follows it in the Canon being called *The Third and Fourth Books of the Kingdoms*. In the Vulgate the titles adopted by the LXX. for the four books were changed to *The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of the Kings*; and this occasioned the alternative titles which are attached to I and II *Sam.* in the A.V. That by the Jews *Samuel* was regarded as a single book appears not only from the fact that the Massorettes, in a note at the end of the Second Book, giving the number of verses in the whole work, use the expression *the Book* (not *Books*) of *Samuel*, but also from the enumeration of the books of the O.T. Scriptures in the Patristic writer Origen (quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 25), βασιλειῶν πρώτη, δευτέρα, παρ' αὐτοῖς (i.e., the Jews) ἔν, Σαμουήλ. The division of *Samuel* into two parts is justified by its convenience, the reigns of Saul and David giving to the sections which respectively include them a natural unity. In LXX. *Luc.* the co-extension of II *Sam.* with the reign of David is made more exact by the inclusion within it of I *Kings* i. 1—ii. 11, I *Kings* (=the Third Book of the Kingdoms) beginning with ii. 12. The reason why the book was entitled *Samuel* is absurdly explained in the Talmud as due to the fact that it was written by that prophet,¹ although his death is recorded in it as early as I xxv. 1. In a literary age it seemed a method of paying honour to the great characters of the past to ascribe to them the authorship of various books that were nameless; and so Moses was credited with the Pentateuch and *Job*; Joshua with his own book and the last eight verses of the Law (recording Moses' death); and Samuel with his own book, *Judges* and *Ruth*.² In the case of the Book of *Samuel* the attachment to it of the prophet's name is only appropriate if it is interpreted to mean that he is one of the most prominent personages in it, and is the centre of interest in the early part of the work, just as Joshua, Ruth, and Esther are in the books that respectively bear their names. The first three chapters of the First Book relate his birth, childhood, and prophetic call; and in subsequent chapters he is represented as taking the leading place in the government of the people, and as consecrating the first two kings, Saul and David. He may thus be said "in a measure to have determined the history during the period embraced by it" (Driver, *LOT*, p. 163). But of the historical work itself he cannot possibly have been the author. As will be shown, it is really a compilation, and the compiler must certainly have lived long after Samuel. Nor is he likely to have been the author of such of its constituent parts as relate events prior to his death. Mention is made, indeed, in I *Chron.* xxix. 29 of the *History* (literally *Words*) of *Samuel the seer*, as well as of

¹ The passage is quoted in Driver, *LOT*, p. xxxii.

² Cp. W. R. Smith, *OTJC*, p. 95

the History of Nathan the prophet and the History of Gad the seer, as sources for the "acts" of David; but there is reason to think that these may have been, like *the Words of Jehu the son of Hanani*, and *the Vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz*, merely sections of a work entitled *the Book of the Kings of Israel* (II Chron. xx. 34, xxxii. 32), and not independent works.¹

III.

The Historical Methods and Sources employed.

Hebrew Methods of Writing History.

The study of any historical work must begin by taking account of the authorities used and the historian's method of using them. Before, however, considering the authorities which lie behind *Samuel*, it will be expedient to notice how this book was utilised by another writer, in the hope that this may afford some clue to the manner in which *Samuel* itself has been produced. For fortunately there exists for a considerable portion of Hebrew history two parallel histories, one contained in the Books of *Samuel* and *Kings*, and the other in the Books of *Chronicles*; and a comparison between the two shows that the author of the second made use of the first, and so enables us to see the method which he pursued. *Chronicles* was composed much later than *Samuel* and *Kings*; and if a few extracts from the two works are placed side by side, it becomes plain that the author of the later work drew upon the earlier, handling it sometimes with more, and sometimes with less, freedom.

(a) II Sam. v. 19-21.

And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And Jehovah said unto David, Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines

into thine hand. And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and he said, Jehovah hath broken mine enemies before me, like the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And they left their images there, and David and his men took them away.

(a) I Chron. xiv. 10-12.

And David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them

into thine hand. So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and David said, God hath broken mine enemies by my hand, like the breach of waters. Therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim. And they left their gods there; and David gave commandment, and they were burnt with fire.

¹ See Driver, *LOT*, pp. 497-8.

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(b) II *Sam.* vi. 12b-15.

And David

went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy. And it came to pass that when they that bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David danced before Jehovah with all his might;

and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the horn.

(c) II *Sam.* viii. 1-2.

And after this it came to pass that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took the bridle of the mother city out of the hand of the Philistines. And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, and brought presents.

The method of composition adopted by the Chronicler will be seen to be very different from that of modern historians. These are accustomed, indeed, to draw information from earlier authorities (generally acknowledging the debt in footnotes or a preface), but they work it up into a fresh shape, and give it to the world again in words of their own choosing. The procedure of the writer of *Chronicles* is quite other than this. The verbal correspondence of the extracts given above is a convincing proof that he

(b) I *Chron.* xv. 25-28.

And David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah from the house of Obed-edom with joy; and it came to pass that when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, that they sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams. And David was

clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the director of the uplifting¹ of the singers; and David had upon him an ephod of linen. So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the horn, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps.

(c) I *Chron.* xviii. 1-2.

And after this it came to pass that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines. And he smote Moab, and

the Moabites became servants to David, and brought presents.

¹ *I.e.*, the uplifting of the voice.

has not only used, but actually incorporated, the passages from II *Sam.*, though he has in places sometimes varied, sometimes abridged, and sometimes enlarged, what he has borrowed. A modern, like a Hebrew, historian does not, of course, refrain from diverging, on occasion, from the statements of an authority whom he has elsewhere followed, but he usually explains his grounds for so doing (such as possession of what he deems better information, or the like). But the Chronicler simply interweaves with the passages which he has borrowed the alterations or additions that he desires to make, without indicating his reasons. The extraneous matter introduced is often marked by the writer's own peculiarities of diction which distinguish it from its context; but where there is little scope for distinctive phraseology, the sections verbally reproduced from the earlier writers and those which proceed from the Chronicler himself are combined without anything to show where he has borrowed from another and where he is original. It does not follow, however, that, because a Hebrew historian transferred portions of another work to his own pages without acknowledgment, he was guilty of literary dishonesty. He must clearly be judged by the habits of his age. "The whole historical literature of Israel before the Exile [was] written by and for men whose interest in the story of the nation was not combined with any interest in the hands by which the story had been first set forth, or from time to time reshaped."¹ That there was no intention on the part of the Chronicler to appropriate what belonged to another in order to win a literary reputation for himself is evident from the mere fact that his work (like all the other historical writings in the O.T., except the Book of *Nehemiah*) is anonymous. His object was seemingly the reproduction, in an improved form, of the composition of a predecessor, some parts of which did not require modification as much as others, and so were incorporated as they stood. From the character of his omissions, additions, and other changes it can fairly be inferred what his motives were in thus revising earlier works. Hebrew historians in general were less concerned with the record of historical facts than with the moral to which such facts pointed; and this feature is especially prominent in the Chronicler, and is manifested in various ways. He was probably a priest, and was greatly, though not exclusively, interested in the ritual side of religion. One of his aims was to point out more clearly than had been done before the religious lessons which the experience of his country and its rulers conveyed, and to show how good and evil fortune attended speedily upon obedience or disobedience to the commandments of Jehovah. It may be illustrated by the addition made, in I *Chron.* x. 13, 14, to the account of Saul's death taken from I *Sam.* xxxi. 1-13, *So Saul*

¹ W. R. Smith, *OTJC*, p. 93.

died for his trespass which he committed against Jehovah, because of the word of Jehovah which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to enquire (thereby); and it is exemplified more extensively by the insertions introduced into extracts derived from the Books of Kings.¹ Another aim was to make illustrious characters in Hebrew history better exemplars to their countrymen by passing over many of the records of their faults and frailties, and by modifying statements about them which seemed injurious to their reputation. Thus in the first and last of the parallel extracts given on pp. 12, 13 the statement that David carried away the Philistines' images is replaced by the statement that he burnt them; whilst the mention of the same ruler's cruel treatment of the Moabites, whose king had once sheltered his parents, is omitted. And a third aim was to show that by pious Hebrew kings the regulations of the Pentateuch, as they existed in the Chronicler's own day, were duly observed, though early historians said nothing about such observances, or even implied that the regulations in question were disregarded (under circumstances that really suggest that they were not then known). The way in which alterations were made from this motive is illustrated by the second extract (p. 13 (b)), which represents the ark as carried by Levites, not by laymen or soldiers, as seems to be implied in II Sam. vi.

Defects of Hebrew Historical Writings.

From what has been said, it is clear that a Hebrew historian was often deficient in many of the qualities which we regard as essential to good historical writing. He was not greatly interested in historic truth for its own sake, and when accuracy conflicted with religious edification he frequently did not hesitate to sacrifice the former to the latter. Instead of constructing his account of the past from the best records accessible to him, he was prone to substitute for such authoritative sources, if they clashed with his ideals, an imaginative version of his own. At the same time all writers were not equally defective; and though great exactness of statement was probably neither aimed at, nor attainable, by even the best Hebrew historians, yet what they lacked in this respect was balanced by literary powers of no mean order (cp. pp. 29 f.). And it fortunately happens that in II Sam. we have a narrative in which the merits of Hebrew historical writing are at their highest.

The Constituent Sources of Samuel.

It is manifest that an account constructed by the process of uniting separate passages taken bodily from another book, with additions composed by the borrower, is very liable to exhibit discrepancies as regards both matters of detail and point of view,

¹ For instances see Driver, *LOT*, p. 494 W. R. Smith, *OTJC*, p. 146 f.

unless extreme care is exercised; and such discrepancies can be detected in *Chronicles*. One instance occurs in I *Chron.* xx., where the conclusion of ver. 1 reproduces the statement of II *Sam.* xi. 1 that David tarried at Jerusalem, whilst ver. 2 implies that the king was at Rabbah in Ammon, in accordance with II *Sam.* xii. 30, the inconsistency being caused by the Chronicler's omission (for the sake of avoiding the story of David's adultery) of all that comes between II *Sam.* xi. 1 and xii. 30. Another is found in II *Chron.* xiv. 3 compared with xv. 17, the first passage affirming that Asa took away the high places, whilst the second asserts that they were not taken away. The latter statement is reproduced from I *Kings* xv. 14, whilst the former is made on the Chronicler's own authority, and is due to his view that a pious king like Asa could not have ignored the direction in *Num.* xxxiii. 52 that all high places were to be destroyed. Now if attention is turned to *Samuel*, it will be found that it also reveals numerous discrepancies of both matter of fact and point of view. The evidence is mainly, though not quite exclusively, furnished by that part of the work which is now comprised in the First Book. An examination of I *Sam.* shows that it contains a series of duplicate narratives, mutually inconsistent, which recount, among other matters, the circumstances of Saul's election as king, of David's introduction to Saul, of Saul's offer to give one of his daughters in marriage to David, of the sparing of Saul's life by David, and of the circumstances of Saul's death on Mount Gilboa. The differences between them will be best seen if they are arranged in parallel columns:—

A.

(a) Saul is anointed by Samuel (styled a *seer*) in accord with the directions of Jehovah, *who, in pity for His people oppressed by the Philistines, desires to give them a king to be their deliverer*; and Saul, having shown his worth by saving Jabesh Gilead, is chosen king at *Gilgal* (I ix.-x. 16, 27, xi. 1-13, 15).

(b) When Saul is afflicted by an evil spirit, David, represented as a warrior and a skilful musician, is brought to the king's presence to relieve his malady by music, and becomes his armour bearer (I xvi. 14-23).

(c) Saul, now hostile to David, offers to him his daughter *Michal* as wife, on condition that he slays

B.

(a) The people, after Samuel (represented as a *judge*) has already conquered the Philistines, demand a king, in spite of the demand being regarded by Samuel as rebellion against Jehovah, and Saul is chosen by lot to be king at *Mizpah* (I viii., x. 17-25, xii.).

(b) When the Israelites and the Philistines confront one another in arms, and a Philistine giant bids Israel provide a champion to meet him, David, represented as a shepherd lad, accepts the challenge, slays the giant, and is taken into Saul's service (I xvii.).

(c) Saul, now hostile to David, offers to him his daughter *Merab*, in the hope that he will be en-

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a hundred Philistines, in the hope that he will fall in the attempt to do so (I xviii. 20-29).

(d) David, now a fugitive, having an opportunity of slaying Saul *in his encampment in the wilderness of Ziph*, spares his life (I xxvi.).

(e) Saul, defeated by the Philistines at Gilboa, *kills himself*, tidings of his death being brought to David by *a fugitive from the Israelite camp* (I xxxi., II i. 1-5, 11, 12).

couraged to fight the Philistines and so meet his death, but eventually gives her to another (I xviii. 17-19).

(d) David, now a fugitive, having an opportunity of slaying Saul *in a cave near Engedi*, spares his life (I xxiv.).

(e) Saul, defeated by the Philistines at Gilboa, *is killed* at his own request by *an Amalekite*, who brings the tidings to David (II i. 6-10).

That these two series of accounts relate to one series of occurrences, is, in most cases, manifest on the surface. In regard to (d), indeed, it is, of course, in the abstract, possible that there occurred two successive incidents of like nature, but if so, it is strange that in the one last recorded there is no reference to the earlier instance of David's magnanimity; and with all the differences between the two narratives there are combined sufficient common features to make it highly probable that they represent variant traditions of the same event. Again, in respect of (e) it has been widely assumed that the Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul told a false story about the manner of the king's death, and that this sufficiently accounts for the discrepancies in what is related. But there are features in it which are not easily explicable by this assumption (see i. 6-10, note); and the view that two different accounts have really been combined together is countenanced by the existence of the other duplicates. There thus appear to be in the Books of *Samuel* a number of parallel narratives describing the same events, but conflicting not only in various details, but also, in certain cases, in the standpoint from which the event recounted is regarded. It is evident, for example, that the view taken in *B* (a) about the institution of the monarchy, where it is represented as incompatible with Jehovah's sovereignty over Israel, is inconsistent with the view expressed in *A* (a) that a king was to be Jehovah's agent for the deliverance of the people from their distress. This difference of attitude towards the monarchy not only confirms the conclusion to which the inconsistencies in detail between the duplicate accounts point, but likewise suggests that they proceeded from different periods in which there prevailed conflicting estimates of the kingship and its value to the Israelite people. If this conclusion is accepted, it is necessary to form some theory to explain how these discrepant sections are

found side by side in the Book of *Samuel*. In the light of what has been learnt about the structure of *Chronicles*, the theory that may first suggest itself is that the one series (*B*) is due to the author of the book, whilst the other (*A*) comes from another work which he has incorporated. But when it is observed that a number of comparatively short summaries occur here and there (I xiv. 47-52, II v. 13-16, viii. 15-18, xx. 23-26), which, owing to their dissimilarity to the rest of the book, have the appearance of proceeding from a source different from either of the two series of narratives among which they are placed, another inference becomes more probable, namely, that the summaries alone originated with the actual author of the work, and that he united together *two* earlier documents, inserting at various points short sections from his own pen, which contain mere lists of names or concise records of matters which for some reason he was either unable or unwilling to relate at length. If this is the right conclusion to be drawn from the conflicting features which the book presents, its structure is more complicated than that of *Chronicles*, but is nevertheless essentially similar. It has been put together out of pre-existing sources, in this instance *two*, that dealt with the same period in a different spirit; and a certain amount of additional information has been supplied by the writer who combined them. The evidence for its composite character only falls short of being as demonstrative as that which exists in the case of *Chronicles*, owing to the fact that the constituents which it embodies no longer survive by the side of it, as *Samuel* and *Kings* survive beside *Chronicles*.

The Hebrew Historians Compilers.

It is apparent from what has been said that the Hebrew historical writers whose works are preserved in the O.T. were not so much authors as *compilers*. They reproduced earlier written sources very much as they found them, only departing from, or altering, such when they failed to serve adequately the purpose which they themselves had in view. This practice was not peculiar, however, to the Hebrew historians: it is true also of Arabic writers of post-Christian times. In these (observes the Cambridge Reader in Arabic) "we come upon what may be termed patch-work narratives, consisting of short passages borrowed (with or without modification) from older works and fitted together by the compiler, who, of course, usually intersperses remarks of his own." And he illustrates his statement by three extracts, two dating from the ninth century A.D., and a third from the thirteenth; and a comparison of these shows that the last writer has reproduced large parts of one of the earlier com-

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positions, and has incorporated with them passages from the other.¹

“Samuel” a Compilation.

It is desirable to consider a little further the method which the compiler of *Samuel* has followed in the treatment of his authorities. A writer who had at his disposal two sources covering the same ground, but more or less divergent in their representations, which he wished to utilise, after the manner of Hebrew historians, for a new work, might have adopted one of several courses. He might have used the source which he considered best, to the exclusion of the other; or he might have taken one as the basis of his narrative, and expanded it either by such extracts from the other as were not incompatible with it, or by additions of his own; or, thirdly, he might have incorporated as much as he could of both, reducing in some measure the inconsistencies between them by harmonizing insertions.² As neither of the two sources which can be traced in *Samuel* have survived in an independent form, it is impossible to say how far the periods of time which they covered coincided. But it is probable that in the compilation of *Samuel* more than one course has been followed. Throughout a great part of the First Book extracts from *both* sources have been embodied, some of the discrepancies being smoothed over by insertions, but enough remaining to render the composite structure of the book obvious. But the even tenor of the Second Book is little disturbed by the presence of glaring inconsistencies, so that in it either a *single* source has been almost exclusively used, or if (as some think) another source has been extensively employed in the second half of the book (ch. ix.-xx.), it must have been a document not differing much, if at all, in date and point of view from that which appears in the first half (ch. i.-viii.).

As we are here only concerned with the Second Book, it is not necessary to illustrate at any length the way in which the compiler has dealt with the contradictions arising from the divergent representations of his two sources, which are so conspicuous in the First Book. For the most part he has tolerated them, startling though they are; but here and there he has made some slight attempt at reconciling them. Thus (to confine attention to the narratives cited on pp. 16, 17) in connexion with (a), the crowning of Saul at Gilgal (derived from A) is described in I xi. 14 as a

¹ See *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 13. Modern scholars believe that the Pentateuch has been constructed out of earlier materials by a method similar to that followed in *Samuel*. Even in Homer it is probable that variant narratives of the same incident have been amalgamated together (see an article by the late Professor Verrall in the *Quarterly Review*, July, 1908). It is tolerably certain, also, that the writers of the First and Third Gospels have incorporated the Gospel of St. Mark and a second document commonly indicated by the symbol Q.

² Cp. W. R. Smith, *OTJC*, p. 113.

“renewal” of the kingdom (the first occasion being assumed to be the election by lot at Mizpah (narrated in *B*). Again, in connexion with (*b*), there is inserted in the account representing David as a shepherd lad a verse (xvii. 15) which seems meant to harmonize it with the other narrative that depicts him as a warrior and a member of Saul’s court by explaining how David *went to and fro from Saul to feed his father’s sheep*. Similarly in regard to (*c*), the two accounts of Saul’s offer to David of his daughter, who is called in the one Merab and in the other Michal, are (very imperfectly) reconciled by the insertion of a clause (xviii. 21b), making Saul say, in connexion with the offer of Michal, that David should be his son-in-law *a second time*. In regard to the discrepancies marked (*b*) and (*c*), it is noteworthy that greater coherence prevails in the Vatican manuscript of the LXX. than in the Hebrew, through the absence of certain passages found in the latter. In (*b*) the missing passages comprise xvii. 12-31, 41, 50, 55-58 (the last four verses containing Saul’s enquiry about David’s parentage, with which, in the composite narrative that now exists, he appears to be already acquainted, see xvi. 19); whilst in (*c*) they include the whole of the section relating to Merab (xviii. 17-19) as well as the harmonizing verse 21b.

IV.

The Date.

Dates of the Constituent Sources.

Since the value of a history depends upon the age and quality of the authorities upon which it is based, it is important to ascertain, if possible, how near the sources incorporated in *Samuel* stand to the incidents related in them. That some considerable interval separates the record from the events recorded is suggested by the occurrence of the expression *unto this day* in iv. 3, vi. 8, xviii. 18 (cp. I v. 5, vi. 18, xxx. 25); though this affords no measure of the interval. But some idea of the approximate dates at which *A* and *B* were produced may be derived from the divergent views (already noticed) which they take of the kingship. In *A* there is no animus against the monarchy: on the contrary, it is represented as a boon granted by Jehovah to His people in their need. This suggests that the source in question originated at a time when the people had not had much experience of unworthy kings (as judged by a later religious standard). It is clear, indeed, from I xxvii. 6 (which probably comes from this source, and calls attention to the fact that *Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of*

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Judah unto this day) that it was composed after the disruption of the Hebrew kingdom into two halves, Israel and Judah, in the reign of Rehoboam :¹ but it would be compatible with this to date it as early as the reign of Abijam (Abijah). Since, however, Abijam's reign was short, it is more likely that it dates from the reign of either Asa or Jehoshaphat, each of whom was a pious king. An early date is likewise recommended by the conception in I ix. 6-9 of Samuel as a mere seer, whose help could be procured, at trifling cost, for the purpose of discovering the whereabouts of some strayed asses; for in the course of time this conception of Samuel was replaced by a much higher one. It is rash to lay very much stress upon the abundance and the vividness of detail observable in portions of the narrative drawn from this source as evidence of the writer's nearness to the events recounted. This may result merely from the writer's interest in realising situations and in tracing their influence upon human character; and the minuteness with which incidents are depicted may be due to a natural gift for dramatic description. Nevertheless he is not likely to have been very far removed from the period of which he treats. And as David's reign seems to have lasted approximately from 1017 to 977 B.C. and Solomon's from 977 to 937, after which date occurred the partition of the kingdom, the composition of *A* may be assigned to the end of the tenth or the beginning of the ninth century. On the other hand, the source denoted by *B* betrays considerable bias against the institution of the monarchy. This is best accounted for by the supposition that it reproduces the opinions of an author writing after the nation had had experience of kings who, like Ahaz, had been disloyal to Jehovah and oppressive to their subjects. The address put into the mouth of Samuel in I xii. is manifestly an exposition of the writer's judgment about the tendency of the Hebrew monarchy as viewed in the light of past history. This points to its having originated at a much later date than *A*. This conclusion is corroborated by the less historical view taken of Samuel, who is depicted as a *judge* (being named with other judges in I xii. 11, strangely by himself!) and ruling the people as the representative of Jehovah; whilst the substitution of a king for such theocratic government is regarded as a rejection, by the nation, of its Divine Sovereign. But not merely is *B* thus further removed from the time of the incidents which it records than its companion source, and on this ground may be suspected of being an inferior authority: but it is also inspired by a more didactic spirit, and so far as it reproduces real traditions, it is likely to include mainly those that were best calculated to point the moral which it was intended to enforce. But some of the narratives contained in this source may have no

¹ Two definite allusions to the reign of Rehoboam occur in the LXX.; see viii. 7 xiv. 27, notes.

traditional basis at all; for it was a habit of Hebrew writers to embody instruction, both religious and secular, in concrete stories instead of imparting it through abstract statements. The author of *A*, on the contrary, appears to be really interested in the course of events for their own sake, and not to have composed his work under the influence of special motives. An adverse judgment on the Hebrew kings, not unlike that expressed in *B* occurs in the book of *Hosea* (see viii. 4, xiii. 10), a work dating from the eighth century; and it is to this period that the origin of *B* may be plausibly attributed. There is some verbal resemblance between I viii. 5, x. 24 and *Deut.* xvii. 14, 15 (a book probably dating from the seventh century B.C.); but it is doubtful whether the writer of *B* was acquainted with *Deuteronomy*, or whether the author of the latter was influenced by the Book of *Samuel* which embodies *B*.¹

Date of the Compilation.

The compiler (or *redactor*, as he is often termed) who united *A* and *B* and contributed the summaries to which allusion has been made must obviously have been later in date than the latest of the authors whose narratives he used, and he cannot have been earlier than the seventh century B.C. But it seems probable, from the arrangement of *Samuel*, as we now have it, that the work underwent a process of editing at a later date than this. For of the three summaries in I xiv. 47-52, II viii. 15-18, and II xx. 23-26, the first is manifestly designed to conclude the account of Saul's public acts (though the king does not disappear until I xxxi.); the second similarly finishes the account of David's public acts; whilst the third ought to close the narrative that relates the troubles caused by David's own offences and by those of his sons Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. But this last narrative is not completed in *Samuel* but in I *Kings* ii., though the concluding summary is found in *Samuel*. Consequently it is a reasonable inference that at some date after the two main sources of *Samuel* were combined, the conclusion of the narrative of David's domestic troubles was severed from *Samuel* by some editor, who included it in the following book (I *Kings* i., ii.), but who left the final summary in *Samuel* (II xx. 23-26), to round off the book which he had mutilated. The addition of the concluding chapters xxi.-xxiv., constituting an appendix, must have been the work of another and still later editor, who placed at the end of the book some historical and poetical pieces associated with David, and so gave to the work its final form. The date of these two editors can only be conjectured: they are more likely to have lived during, or after, the Exile (587-537 B.C.) than before it.

¹ See Driver, *Deut.*, p. 213.

V.

The Historical Value.

The Origins of the Sources.

The discovery that II *Sam.*, in common with I *Sam.*, has been put together out of two earlier documents, sections of which have been united by a compiler who has added some summaries of his own, and whose work has been supplemented by a later editor or editors, is almost as far as we can go in the ascertainment of the literary sources of which it is composed. In attempting to reach the sources *behind* such sources, it is for the most part only possible to indulge in guesswork. The single case where the origin of an extract incorporated in one of the constituent documents is stated is that of David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan (ii. 19-27). This is definitely described as having been derived from the *Book of Jashar* (for which see i. 18), and bears every mark of being the production of David himself; and so is one of the most precious examples of early Hebrew poetry. The fragment from David's elegy over Abner (iii. 33, 34) is probably also authentic. Of the genuineness of the other two poems described in the book as compositions of David, viz., the psalm in xxii. and the "Last Words of David" in xxiii. 1-7, much doubt may reasonably be entertained (see notes). With regard to the ultimate authority upon which the rest of the prose contents of the book depends no indication is afforded. The conjecture may, indeed, be hazarded, not without some plausibility, that various particulars that find place in the book are based on official records. Mention is made in the lists of David's officials of both a Recorder and a Scribe; and although the duties of neither of these functionaries are defined, it is reasonable to suppose that one or both may have drawn up lists of persons filling various offices of State, notes of important events, and particulars of services rendered by distinguished soldiers; and that these afforded materials for the writers and compilers of the existing narratives. Mention is found of *Chronicles of King David* in I *Chron.* xxvii. 24; and such might well be based on State *memoranda*. It is possible, too, that some records of contemporary occurrences were preserved by the three prophets Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, whose names occur in *Samuel*, and to whose *Histories* (literally *Words*) reference is made in I *Chron.* xxix. 29 (pp. 11, 12); but as there is no allusion to such authorities in the *Book of Samuel* itself, the existence of historical documents drawn up by these prophets and the use of them in the composition of the work can only be conjectural. To determine under these circumstances the precise value of the detailed accounts of events contained in *Samuel* is not

possible. The fact that we have no means of appraising the quality of the information, documentary or traditional, which was available for a history of the reign of David precludes much criticism of it. Where parallel but conflicting representations of the same occurrences have been preserved, it is, indeed, comparatively easy to decide between them, for, as has been seen, one series (*B*) shows indications of being later than the other (*A*), and hence it may be concluded that where it is inconsistent with the latter it is less trustworthy. But where, as is the case with the greater part of *II Samuel*, there is not this choice, it is only open to us to estimate what is related by the standard of intrinsic probability. There is no external testimony to the events described in *II Samuel* as there is to various occurrences mentioned in *II Kings*, such as that supplied by the writings of contemporary prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries, by the Moabite stone, or by the Assyrian inscriptions; so that the historian's account cannot be checked by comparison with another witness. There exists, indeed, for a considerable portion of the book a parallel account in the First Book of *Chronicles*. But, as has been seen, large parts of this work have been extracted from *I Samuel*; whilst the supplementary matter contained in it is not only of later date, and so of inferior authority, than the information afforded by *I Samuel*, but largely reflects the view concerning the conditions of David's time, which was held by a subsequent body of writers familiar with a highly developed religious system, the origin of which they antedated. Consequently, *II Samuel* is the primary, and for certain parts of the history the only, record of the period covered; so that its narrative, where there are conflicting statements, holds the field as being the earlier. Apart from it there is no basis upon which to construct any history of the time at all.

The Credibility of the Narrative.

It is consequently very satisfactory that the account of David's reign presented in *II Samuel* is, in general, so coherent and circumstantial as to commend itself as worthy of confidence. Practically the whole of the record, apart from ch. vii., appears to belong to the same period. There are few glaring inconsistencies of representation, and it contains no marvels which strain belief. It does not, of course, follow that a consistent story is necessarily a true one; but the absence of inconsistencies is, at any rate, a negative test; and in the lack of corroborative evidence it is often the only test that can be applied. Judged in this way, then, the account which is given of the reign of David is as good as we can expect to have of so distant a period of history. The author tells extremely well a very interesting story, though his accuracy must not be over-rated. He was

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not contemporary with the events, nor in touch (so far as can be judged) with any who had been personal actors in them. This would be of little importance if there had been abundance of written material available. But in the tenth or ninth century the aids at the disposal of a Hebrew writer who desired to provide an accurate narrative of what had happened a couple of generations or more before his own time must have been very meagre. Public records, whether written on stone slabs, clay or wooden tablets, or prepared skins are not likely to have been either numerous or full; and probably could not be examined with much facility by those desirous of consulting them. There were no journals supplying contemporary accounts of passing events, or reports of conversations between persons of distinction on important occasions. Consequently even where written sources of information existed, furnishing a trustworthy outline of occurrences, the historian, in expanding them, must have been dependent either upon oral tradition or upon his own imagination. Moreover, the mental predisposition of Eastern peoples is not towards exactness of statement; and a genius for composing and relating interesting stories does not easily subsist with the conscientious self-restraint (so essential to an historian, as judged by modern standards) which distinguishes between what is known and what is merely probable. In respect of speeches, in particular, the author's imagination must have played a large part. It is certain that many of the utterances represented as David's by the Chronicler are the composition of the Chronicler himself, for they are marked by idioms belonging to a late period of Hebrew literature;¹ and it is reasonable to suppose that those ascribed to David in the earlier books owe much of their form, at least, to the historians who relate them. Even a Thucydides had to admit that it was hard both for himself and for others who gave him information to recollect a speaker's precise words, and that he put into the mouths of those whose utterances he reported the sentiments and expressions appropriate to the persons and the occasions, though he claimed to have tried to give the general purport of what was really said.²

VI.

The Religious Value.

The distinguishing mark of a history as contrasted with a mere chronicle is explanation. It seeks to account for events either as the resultant of certain common forces or tendencies in human nature, or as the fulfilment of some Divine plan; and by thus

¹ See Driver. *Expositor*, April, 1895.

² Thuc. I. xxii.

explaining them, it aims at rendering the record of these events instructive for the present and the future.

The Hebrew historians adopted a religious standpoint, and wrote in the conviction that human fortunes manifested the rule and providence of God. Some of them were more didactic in their methods of writing than others: the author of *Chronicles*, for instance, does not fail to make perfectly clear the conclusion which he draws from what he relates, whereas the writer of *Samuel* more often allows his readers to deduce their own inferences. But the latter as well as the former makes it his object to show how the conduct of men bears fruit in their later experiences, and how the Divine laws are not broken with impunity.

Hebrew Conceptions of History compared with ours.

We cannot, however, apply the lessons which the Biblical historians designed to impart without some measure of qualification. Both the manner and the matter of their narratives must in some degree be regarded from a changed point of view if what is narrated is to be of value at the present day.

(a) Divine Revelations.

To begin with, we have to allow for the dramatic directness with which Divine revelations are depicted as being made to men. To younger readers of the Bible this is sometimes a source of perplexity, though to the more mature the explanation must be obvious enough. Hebrew narrative has many of the qualities of epic poetry; and communications of which we should only give the substance in oblique narration are generally reported in the first person, as though the actual words of the speaker were reproduced. Consequently we cannot take even human speeches as representing accurately what really passed between the speakers. Still less can the communications described as being made by God to men be understood literally. When God is depicted as speaking with men as a man might speak with his friend, this is merely due to the Hebrew habit of thought, which externalized God. In reality, God is not external to men in the same way that men are to one another. His Personality, whilst so far distinct from human personalities as to leave room for the exercise by men of free will, yet includes and comprehends all other personalities; and the communications narrated in the Bible as passing from God to man represent the convictions which the latter reached about the Divine will and purposes through the medium of their mental and spiritual faculties. These convictions, from one point of view, may be considered as Divine revelations, and from another as human intuitions, the spirit of man whereby he comes to know God and to understand His will having its origin in the Spirit of God Himself. And so long as

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it is recognized that when God is described as speaking to men, His Spirit was really working through their reason and conscience, the language of the Bible ought to be no more liable to mislead than other popular, though erroneous, modes of speech.

(b) Divine Providence.

(b) Our conception of God's manner of working in the physical world differs in large measure from that entertained by the Hebrews. We believe that the Divine control of the universe is exercised through general laws; and that whilst there is some evidence in human experience of God's moral government, which brings upon offenders the punishment merited by their offences, the correspondence between men's fortunes and their deserts is by no means uniformly close; so that we have been compelled to believe in a future life wherein God's righteousness will be perfectly manifest, just because it is so imperfectly vindicated here. But the Hebrew historical writers had not yet reached a belief in another life; and so they sought to trace God's providence in this world despite many awkward facts. They idealized history, and depicted the principles of Divine justice as realized with an exactness and an immediacy which transcend general experience.

(c) Retribution for Sin.

(c) Our ideas of right and wrong have undergone much change and development in the course of centuries. It is only by slow degrees that the human reason attains to clearness of spiritual vision. In the field of intellectual knowledge it is commonly recognized that there has been gradual and continuous progress; and the same has really occurred in the field of moral perception. Just as there has been development in the sphere of physical life, so there has been a parallel process in the sphere of the human conscience. And any advance in our moral ideas influences religion by reacting upon our notions of God. Many deeds that were regarded in ancient times as sinful came to be considered such simply because they coincided with unfortunate experiences which were interpreted as evidence of Divine resentment. Since any unusual misfortune was viewed as a punishment sustained for some offence, the occurrence to an individual of a disaster, exceptional in its character or extent, was accounted for by some grave sin on the part of the sufferer or his forefathers; or if it happened to a nation, it was attributed to the misconduct of the Sovereign or of the collective people, as circumstances suggested. It is only through coming to understand better the uniform operation of physical laws that we have gradually ceased to explain calamities generally by some moral offence committed by the victims of them. This change of attitude does not involve the denial of *all* connexion between sin and calamity; but it leads us to look for

it in different directions from those in which the Hebrews mostly sought to trace it—directions in which human responsibility is more plainly in evidence than is the case with many of the physical catastrophes wherein a primitive people were accustomed to discern it.

It will now be seen in what respects the moral which the writer of II *Samuel* meant his narrative to convey has to be qualified by later experience and reflection. It is no longer possible to feel confident that the famine, to remove which seven of Saul's descendants were put to death, was really sent in retribution for Saul's conduct in regard to the Gibeonites; still less that the pestilence which followed David's census was a Divinely appointed penalty for it. Similarly, the sudden death of Uzzah after touching the Ark we cannot regard in the same light as the Hebrew historian: if we were to do so, we should be returning to a conception of God far below that with which the teaching of our Lord has made us familiar. Even in respect to the death of the child that was the offspring of David's intrigue with Bathsheba, experience hardly supports us in believing as confidently as the writer of II *Samuel* that it was expressly ordained as a chastisement for its parents' sin. Human sins are not here so uniformly followed by speedy retribution of this nature that, when instances seem to occur, we can feel sure that the inference is justified.

(d) Instructive Warnings.

It is, however, otherwise with some of the remaining misfortunes that befell David. Experience leaves us in little doubt as to the baleful influence which the example of licentiousness in a father is likely to exercise upon his children; and the historian, in relating the crime of Amnon immediately after his account of David's adultery, and thereby suggesting that the king's evil example bore its natural fruit, draws no unwarranted conclusion. Amnon's offence, again, was avenged by the death of the offender at the hand of his brother Absalom. The fratricide, in turn, loved though he was by his father, was prompted by ambition as selfish as David's or Amnon's sensual passion, to seek his father's throne and life; and perished in battle against him. This series of tragedies, ensuing upon the narrative of the king's own vicious self-indulgence, follow one another with the inevitableness of the successive phases of a Greek trilogy. The narrative of David's reign, therefore, after full allowance has been made for those features in it which reflect the judgments of the historian's own age and not ours, is yet full of warnings worth heeding by us who live so many centuries later.

(e) Elevating Examples.

But the instructiveness of II *Samuel* is not confined to salutary

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cautions against vice or lawless ambition. If the historian's portraiture of David merely showed him to have been the slave of his passions, it would have much less interest and value than it actually possesses. In reality, however, David's character was marked by several features commanding our admiration. Among the qualities which stand out prominently in the record of his life are his winning and lovable personality, his readiness to repent of his errors, and the fervour of his piety. With regard to the last, the rude nature of some of the religious rites of David's age should not prevent us from appreciating at their true worth the feelings of which they were the manifestation. Even the grotesqueness of the scene in which David danced before the Ark cannot disguise the fact that the humility and gratitude marking his reply to the strictures of Michal breathe the spirit of real devotion. Not less genuinely religious was the resignation which he evinced firstly on the occasion of the death of his first-born child by Bathsheba, and afterwards when he was compelled by Absalom to retire from Jerusalem. Among the influences which historical studies exert, none are of greater importance than the impressions produced by the great characters of the past; and it can scarcely be questioned that, whilst the record of David's career does not fail to supply grave admonitions, it is not lacking in examples challenging our emulation.

(f) Religious Faith.

Finally, attention may be drawn to the thoughts that find utterance in ch. vii. It would be untrue to history to take as representing David's own spiritual conceptions the noble thanksgiving put into his mouth in this chapter. But whilst the worth of the chapter as an authority for the occasion which it purports to describe is small, its permanent value from a religious point of view is very different. Though it embodies ideas belonging to a later period than David's, the fact leaves unimpaired its importance as an elevated and elevating expression of true religious faith and feeling.

VII.

The Literary Qualities.

The Books of *Samuel* are of very great importance to the historian since they contain an account of the Israelite people during a critical period of their national development. But apart from their value as histories, they are of the highest interest from their literary merit. The events which are narrated and the men who figure in them are depicted with a vigour and a simplicity,

a concentration and a charm that make them hold the reader's attention from first to last. In their vivid portraiture and their graphic descriptions of scenes they are unsurpassed among the books of the O.T. And since the Second Book is not inferior in these respects to the First, it may be worth while to illustrate briefly in detail some of the qualities in it which deserve notice.

The Portrayal of David.

The subject of the Second Book, unlike that of the First, is confined to the life and career of a single pre-eminent personality, so that the interest is not divided. Moreover, David is a much more attractive character to delineate than Saul or even Samuel, who occupy so large a space in the First Book. As compared with his predecessor Saul, a man of simple disposition, who became warped by disease and soured by misfortune, David was endowed with a highly complex nature, which stands out clearly from the historian's pages. Concisely, and yet with consummate skill, the writer shows how the king's ardent temperament carried him away in the direction of both virtue and vice; how, for instance, he could enthusiastically participate in a religious dance before the Ark of Jehovah and shortly afterwards yield to the promptings of a licentious passion, to gratify which he did not refrain from murder. And with equal effectiveness does the historian make it plain that if David was prone to sin grossly, he was quick to be moved to sorrow for his sin, so that his fault appears half-redeemed by his speedy repentance. But he is not presented merely as a creature of impulse, swayed by passing moods: he is depicted as tenacious alike in affection and in resentment; and, whilst in faithful loyalty to his beloved Jonathan he befriends his son, he takes measures, before his death, to secure that vengeance for their offences should overtake both Shimei and Joab. All these features in a strangely composite character are made to disclose themselves without any superfluous comment on the part of the writer. And the historian's art is perhaps illustrated by nothing more happily than by the manner in which David, when deeply stirred, is represented as using for the expression of his emotions that gift of song for which he was famed. The elegy on Saul and Jonathan, and the fragmentary lament upon Abner, help us in no small degree to realize what manner of man David was.

The Representation of other Personalities.

The same insight into character and the same sureness in its portrayal are displayed in the representation of those other personalities which, from the place that they occupy in the history, come next to the king. Joab's downright and relentless disposition, though not unmingled with craft, offers a

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foil to David's more adroit temperament. He appears as one endowed with great practical ability, but uninspired by ideals and untrammelled by scruples. A man of disciplined habits but of unbridled feelings, he has the primitive instincts and the ready cunning of a fierce soldier. Even his quality of loyalty to David has no chivalry in it, for it never withholds him from following the impulses of his own vindictive nature. In Abner there is presented a figure of another type—the powerful military chief, ambitious and self-assertive, who, serving under a feeble master like Eshbaal, becomes filled with a sense of his own importance, and who, when his ambitious aspirations have been detected, does not hesitate to change sides. In Absalom the quality of ambition is also manifested, but in an even more repellent form, and with less capacity to back it; for after incurring the guilt of seeking to dethrone and destroy his father, he lacks the ability to discern the right means for attaining success in his enterprise. On the other hand, his half-brother Amnon is just a heartless profligate, who, without compunction, or regard for possible consequences, tramples on a woman's honour to gratify a passing desire. The minor personages, too, of the history are depicted with equal skill. Among these there is, first, Amnon's companion Jonadab, who, through his quick-wittedness, both suggests how the profligate can accomplish his end, and, when news comes that all the royal princes are slain, is the foremost to recognize that Amnon alone has met a merited death. Next, there is the loyal entertainer of David during his flight, the aged Barzillai, who, careful for the interests of his son, accepts for him the place at court which he refuses for himself. Finally there are the unprincipled Ziba, who advances his own fortunes at the expense of the reputation of his helpless master Meribaal (Mephibosheth); and the wild Benjamite Shimei, cursing and fawning by turns as David's cause declines or recovers.

The Description of Scenes.

Scenes, too, are presented with the same vividness and life-like quality as characters. Conspicuous amongst such is the brief description of the sundering of Paltiel and Michal, where the paths of the parting is enhanced by Abner's curt command to the weeping husband to begone. Very graphic, too, is the scene in David's palace where Bathsheba's child lies dying. The agonized father's supplications to God during successive days for the child's life, and the hushed voices of the servants as they stand whispering together, are intensely suggestive of the conditions characteristic of a house where the approach of death is awaited. Not less admirable is the account of the debate in Absalom's council-chamber, where Ahithophel's concise speech,

conveying the soundest advice in fewest terms, is set in effective contrast to the volubility of Hushai, who astutely disguises the worthlessness of his proposal by a multitude of words and by cunning flattery of the prince he pretends to serve. Nor can a more striking commentary upon the folly of the fatuous Absalom be easily imagined than that represented as passed by the same keensighted Ahithophel when he silently turns on his heel and goes home to arrange his affairs preparatory to taking his own life. And a fourth scene described with the same ability as the preceding is that in which the two messengers carrying word to David of his son's defeat and death are contrasted with one another. Ahimaaz, the voluntary messenger whose eagerness to be the first to bring news of the collapse of the rebellion has led him to outstrip the Nubian slave, finds himself, when questioned about Absalom, too tongue-tied to tell David the truth. But the slave, lacking the sensitiveness of his companion, shows no backwardness, but makes the announcement of the young man's death without any regard for the father's feelings. And the poignancy of grief has rarely found such pathetic utterance as in the few words put into the mouth of the broken-hearted king when he hears the tidings.

VIII.

The Physical Features of Palestine.¹

The Situation of Palestine.

Along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, between the ranges of Taurus and Amanus on the north, and the little stream of Rhinocolura (the modern *El Arish*) on the south, and between the sea on the west and the desert on the east, there stretches a tract of fertile land 400 miles long and from 70 to 100 miles broad. This was called by the Greeks and Romans *Syria*, a name derived from the ancient *Assyria*, which lay far away on the Tigris. Within this region, about midway from north to south, rise the twin ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. The country north of these heights, as far as Mount Amanus and the Gulf of Issus, was divided into Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, whilst south of them, to the Rhinocolura on the borders of Egypt, lay *Palestine*. It was the latter alone that was the scene of most of the history recorded in the O.T., and that exclusively concerns us here.

Its Characteristics.

Palestine is a land of comparatively small extent, comprising about 10,000 square miles. Its surface is remarkably varied, and

¹ On the subject of this chapter see G. A. Smith, *HG*, pp. 127, *fol.*

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may be described as consisting of five parallel zones running from north to south. These in order from west to east are

(1) A plain skirting the Mediterranean, interrupted at one place by the ridge of Carmel, which ends at the sea and forms the only promontory on the coast.

(2) A line of low hills called the *Shephelah* or *Lowland*, stretching along the west flank of Judah.

(3) A central range of higher hills, separated from the preceding by a series of valleys, and extending south from the Lebanons until it slopes away into a parched district called the *Negeb*, or *South*, which in turn merges in the desert.

(4) A very deep valley, sinking below sea-level, and traversed by the River *Jordan*, which flows into an inland lake, known as the *Dead Sea*.

(5) A high plateau east of the Jordan, largely covered with forest.

From this brief description it will be seen that the main routes of communication through the country from north to south must pass along the maritime plain (cp. *Exod.* xiii. 17) or the table-land lying east of the Jordan. There were, indeed, additional roads serving local needs, such as that which connected Beersheba and Jerusalem with towns to the north of the latter, and which ran along the central range, or that which passed along the Jordan (cp. xviii. 23); but these were of minor importance. From east to west the only convenient route is where the central range is broken by a broad vale, produced by an extension eastwards of the maritime plain, called the *Vale of Esdraelon*. This, which suddenly drops into the Jordan Valley, enables roads from Damascus and the east, that can cross the Jordan at Bethshan, or higher up the river, to reach the coast by low passes over Carmel at Megiddo and Dothan. Elsewhere the central range is only crossed from east to west by narrow torrent-valleys or *wâdies*, which, filled by the rains in winter, are dry in summer. The most important of these run up from the fords of the Jordan at Jericho, not far from where the river empties itself into the Dead Sea.

Its Physical Divisions.

Each of the five zones mentioned has its peculiar characteristics and distinctive products. (1) The **coastal** plain, the northern end of which was known as *Sharon*, is a corn-growing district, and abounds with flowers (cp. *Cant.* ii. 1, marg.). From an historical standpoint it is chiefly interesting as being the main highway along which soldiers and traders passed between Egypt and the empires on the Euphrates and Tigris (Babylonia and Assyria). (2) **The hills of the Shephelah** form an outlying rampart for the hill country of Judah, so that an enemy, advancing upon the

latter, finds, when he has crossed them, that he still has to force his way into the central range behind them. The Shephelah is penetrated by various defiles, the most notable in order from north to south being those of *Aijalon* (ascending from Gaza to Gibeon), *Sorek* (leading towards Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and ending, it would seem, in the valley of Rephaim) and *Elah* (which forks, and affords an approach to Hebron as well as to Bethlehem). (3) **The central range** constitutes the heart of Western Palestine, and both Jerusalem and Samaria were situated within it. It is cut by numerous wâdies that ascend from the Jordan Valley, and, eventually crossing the summit of the range, communicate with one or other of the defiles alluded to on the west. It produces olives, grapes, and cereals, but the southern end of it is more adapted for the pasturage of sheep than for the growth of crops. (4) **The Jordan Valley**, which has its origin in an extensive geological fault, is the most remarkable physical feature in Palestine. The river, which takes its rise between Lebanon and Hermon, flows in its course through two lakes (the *Waters of Merom* and the *Sea of Chinnereth*) before it ends in a third, already mentioned (the *Dead Sea*). The valley which it threads has a varying width of from three to fourteen miles, and descends rapidly as it proceeds southward, until it terminates in the basin of the Dead Sea, 1,292 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. At the bottom of the valley the river has cut a narrow channel, having a wide fringe of jungle-covered level ground on either side, where lions and other beasts of prey once abounded.¹ Its most fordable shallows are in the north, near Bethshan, where the *Valley of Jezreel* ascends to the Plain of Esdraelon, and in the south, where, in the neighbourhood of Jericho, the pass of Michmash leads up to the hills of Benjamin. A road from the lower fords also ascends towards Jerusalem, traversing on its way the shoulders of the Mount of Olives.² The depth of the Jordan Valley renders the air very hot, fostering a rank vegetation. Both at Bethshan and Jericho, where the valley expands, the soil is very fertile; and the latter locality was especially famous for its palm trees (*Deut.* xxxiv. 3). (5) The last of the five zones, **the country on the east of the Jordan**, is a different land from that on the opposite side of the river. The one feature which the two have in common, is altitude; and Eastern Palestine is of even higher elevation than Western. It is a table-land, cut by three considerable streams, the *Arnon*, the *Jabbok*, and the *Yarmuk*, in the order named from south to north. The region between the Arnon and the Yarmuk, which the Jabbok divides into two halves, was known as *Gilead*; whilst north of the Yarmuk lay *Bashan*. The surface of the country was largely covered with grass, afford-

¹ See note on xxiii. 20.

² See note on xv. 23.

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ing extensive pasturage for sheep and cattle; but many parts of Gilead were occupied by forests of oak and terebinth.¹

Its Historical Importance.

The physical features of Palestine, as well as its situation, have been important influences on its history. Owing to the nature of its surface, soil, and climate, its resources have always been rather limited. Though the land produces wheat, barley, lentils, pulse, grapes, olives, figs, dates, pomegranates, almonds and mulberries, yet with the exception of the maritime plain, there is not sufficient level ground for the plentiful cultivation of cereals. The fertility is very variable, for there are few permanent watercourses, at least on the west of the Jordan, so that for irrigation it is largely dependent upon the rainfall; and as this is not always regular, drought and famine are not unknown.² The country has few mineral deposits (the *coal* mentioned in the O.T. being wood fuel); and its straight and unindented coastline deprives it almost entirely of harbours. In consequence, the occupation of its people has been in the main the rearing of sheep and cattle, rather than the cultivation of the soil or industrial pursuits. Moreover, the general character of the country, which consists, as has been seen, of hilly ridges cut by numerous ravines, has contributed to foster a spirit of division amongst its inhabitants, often preventing them from acquiring the strength that comes from union, and is essential to national success. But whilst Palestine is not a land endowed with the advantages that most excite cupidity, it has always been the scene of much history. This has been principally due to the fact (already indicated) that through or along it there pass the main roads from Asia Minor and the Euphrates to Egypt and Arabia. To secure these routes has always been an object to the great powers in its vicinity; and this has led to interference with the various communities that by their situation have commanded them. And if Palestine has never been wealthy enough to make its acquisition for its own sake very desirable to a powerful empire, it has always had attractions for the nomadic tribes of the desert; and it was as a nomadic people that Israel itself invaded and conquered it.

IX.

Israel's Neighbours in Palestine.

The various peoples that occupied different parts of Palestine when it was conquered by Israel, and the several nations which

¹ See xviii. 9.

See xxi. 1.

lived on its borders, and with which it came into contact during the period covered by II *Samuel*, are the following :—

The Canaanites. This is a geographical name, derived from *Canaan*, which probably means *low-lying* land, and should therefore properly describe the region stretching along the Mediterranean coast. It came, however, to be employed, in a more extended sense, of the whole country, and the derivative *Canaanite* was similarly applied to its collective inhabitants. The Canaanites spoke a language like Hebrew,¹ and though regarded as descendants of Ham in *Gen.* x. 6, were doubtless a Semitic people, and probably allied to the Israelites by race. They seem to have been divided into a large number of separate city-states, between which so little cohesion subsisted that they were subjugated by Israel in detail. But two circumstances enabled some of their cities to retain their independence until David's time and even later. One was the fact that fortresses of exceptional strength, like Jerusalem (whose inhabitants were styled *Jebusites*), could defy the assault of a people who during their desert life had had little experience of siege operations; and the second was the possession by the Canaanites of horses and chariots, a form of warlike equipment which Israel at first lacked. The terms *Hivite* and *Perizzite*, which are often combined with *Canaanite*, perhaps describe "village folk" and "country folk" respectively; whilst *Girgashite* may be a local name.

The Amorites. This is thought to be a racial name, the Amorites being probably immigrants among the Canaanites. At the Conquest they were chiefly settled on the east of Jordan, under their king Sihon; but they also dwelt on the west of the river, being sometimes distinguished from the Canaanites as occupiers of the hill country (*Num.* xiii. 29, *Deut.* i. 7) in contrast to the latter as dwellers in the plains. But like *Canaanite*, the term *Amorite* is often used to denote the collective pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine (*Gen.* xv. 16, I *Sam.* vii. 14, *Amos* ii. 9).

The Hittites. This was also a racial name, the Hittites being a people of probably Mongolian stock. They once constituted a powerful empire, the chief cities of which were Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes. In the O.T. they are generally mentioned (as is natural) in connection with the northern border of Israel, but their name is also occasionally applied to the pre-Israelite population of the whole of Canaan (see *Josh.* i. 4).

The Phœnicians. In early times the territory of the Phœnicians consisted of the narrow strip of country enclosed between Lebanon and the sea, and extending from the Orontes in the north to the neighbourhood of Mount Carmel in the south. They were of the same stock as the Canaanites, and their language closely resem-

¹ See p. 2.

bled Hebrew. Their chief cities were Tyre, Zidon, Acco, and Gebal. They devoted themselves to over-sea commerce, held in their hands the greater part of the carrying trade of the ancient world, excelled in all kinds of craftsmanship, and were a great colonizing power (Carthage being one of their most important settlements). It was from the Phœnicians that the Greeks, the Romans, and the modern nations of Europe successively obtained the alphabet,¹ though the source from which the Phœnicians themselves derived it is obscure.

The Philistines. Philistia (ἡ Παλαιστίνη) is the origin of the name *Palestine*, though the Philistines occupied only the southwestern part of Palestine, bordering the sea. They were immigrants into Canaan from Caphtor, which is generally identified with Crete (see on p. 52); but whether Crete was their original home, or they were one of the many tribes that settled there (cp. Hom. *Od.*, xix. 172 ff.)² is uncertain. Though they differed conspicuously from the Hebrews and other Semitic peoples in not being circumcised, some at least of their names and those of their gods are of a Semitic type.³ From the fact that they are first mentioned in the Bible in connection with Gerar, which was south of the cities they afterwards occupied, it has been supposed that they first settled near Egypt and later moved northwards. Their immigration into Canaan probably occurred not long before the Israelites' invasion of the same country. Their form of government was rather unusual, for their cities, which numbered five, Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron, each under a separate ruler, were united in a confederacy. Included amongst them were the survivors of an aboriginal race called *Rephaim*, whose land they had presumably seized. These were of gigantic stature, and some of them were marked by certain peculiar characteristics (see xxi. 20).

The Moabites. These at one time occupied the table-land east of the northern half of the Dead Sea, from the Arnon to an undefined limit in the direction of the Jabbok. They were connected with the Israelites, seemingly by race and certainly by language; and before the invasion of Canaan by the latter, had taken possession of the land of an aboriginal people called the *Emim*. They had themselves, however, been driven south of the Arnon by the Amorites; and it was from the latter that the Israelites wrested the region which was eventually assigned to the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

The Ammonites. These were a people who were akin to the

¹ The very word preserves the names of the first two Phœnician letters, *Aleph* and *Beth*.

² ἐν δ' ἄνθρωποι πολλοί, ἀπειρέσιοι, καὶ ἐννήκοντα πολῆες, ἀλλῇ δ' ἄλλων γλώσσα μεγιγμένη,

³ E.g., Abimelech, Dagon.

Moabites (the descent of both being traced to Lot), and, like them, at first occupied part of the country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, their lands lying to the north of those of Moab. But the Amorites dispossessed them as they did the Moabites, cutting them off from the Jordan and the Dead Sea, and driving them eastward. Their chief city was *Rabbah* (xi. 1).

The Edomites. These, again, were a people related to Israel by race, their descent being traced to Esau, the brother of Jacob. They were settled on either side of the *Arabah*, the deep depression which stretches south of the Dead Sea, their territory extending as far as the Gulf of Akabah, where they had the ports of Elath and Eziongeber. From Moab they were separated by the brook Zered (the modern Wâdy el Ahsa). Like their neighbours they were immigrants, who had exterminated or absorbed an aboriginal people called the *Horites*, who were perhaps a race of cave dwellers. Edom was sometimes known as *Seir*, "the hairy," perhaps from the brushwood which abundantly covered the surface. Its principal city was Petra.

The Syrians. This name, really a corruption of *Assyrians* (cp. p. 32), has come to be used as the title of a people who would be more properly styled *Arameans*. Aram was the appellation of an extensive country, including both the land situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates (*Aram Naharaim* or Mesopotamia), and that lying between the Euphrates and the heights of Anti-Lebanon and Hermon. This latter region, with which alone II Sam. is concerned, embraced several states. (1) *Aram of Damascus*, a country lying east of the northern extremity of Hermon, and watered by two rivers called in Hebrew the Abana (or Amana) and the Pharpar, which sink into an extensive marsh. (2) *Aram of Zobah*, a small territory situated between Anti-Lebanon and the territory of Damascus. (3) *Aram of Rehob* (or *Bethrehob*), a small city-state not far from the Upper Jordan, north of the Waters of Merom. (4) *Aram of Maacah*, a country probably situated between the Sea of Chinnereth (Lake Gennesaret) and Bashan. (5) *Geshur*, a small Aramean state, which, like Maacah, bordered on Gilead (*Josh.* xiii. 11), and, with the latter, probably lay within the district afterwards known as *Gaulonitis* (the modern Jaulân). (6) *Tob*, a city-state, probably situated a little south of Gadara.

The Amalekites. These were a nomadic tribe of Arabian stock, generally represented as occupying the desert between the South of Judah and the wilderness of Sinai (the modern *El Tih*). Their descent is traced to a grandson of Esau (*Gen.* xxxvi. 12), though they figure in the history of Abraham (*Gen.* xiv. 7). They encountered the Israelites, after the Exodus, at Rephidim, near Mount Sinai (*Exod.* xvii. 8-16), and harassed them on other

occasions by cutting off stragglers (*Deut.* xxv. 17-19). After Israel had entered Canaan, they continued to make raids upon them (*Judg.* vi. 3); and it was in a punitive expedition against them that David was engaged shortly before his accession to the throne (*I xxx.*).

X.

Outlines of the Reign of David.

The Political Conditions at David's Accession.

The Second Book of *Samuel* is exclusively devoted to an account of David's reign, the close of which is related in the first two ch. of *I Kings* (which, as has been seen, must once have been closely connected with one of the constituent documents of *Samuel*).¹ But in order to understand the circumstances under which David came to the throne and some of the events that occurred in his reign, it is desirable to recount briefly not only certain incidents in the previous reign, but even to glance at the conditions which preceded it. To take the latter first, prior to the time of Saul the Hebrew people had been a mere aggregate of tribes loosely held together by ties of blood and religion, by common traditions, and by the exigencies of their political situation. There was no national organization; and the security of the several tribes had depended upon the ability of each to defend its own frontiers, with comparatively little help from its neighbours. In times of crisis and peril leaders, such as the Judges, had generally been forthcoming; but the influence which they acquired by success only occasionally extended beyond the boundaries of their own district and people. The weakness inseparable from this lack of central organization eventually made greater unity of government essential; and the need of it was emphasized by the serious peril that menaced Israel from the growing power of the Philistines. The remedy which the situation required was discerned by an Ephraimite seer named Samuel, who in the name of Jehovah, the national God, anointed as the first king over united Israel Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. The account contained in *I Sam.* ix. 1-x. 16 recites the circumstances of Samuel's choice of Saul as viewed from a *religious* standpoint. The *political* conditions which led him to select Saul, apart from the latter's personal qualities of promptitude and valour (with which he was doubtless acquainted), were probably connected with the relation in which Benjamin stood to Ephraim. Both tribes were traced by tradition to off-spring of the same mother; and possibly Benjamin was in some way under the protection of Ephraim. If so, Samuel, in choosing Saul, did not go much beyond the limits of his own tribe. Saul,

See p. 22

for a while justified Samuel's choice; but ultimately the king and the prophet became estranged, and Samuel in his disappointment turned elsewhere for a successor to Saul, his choice (which was again guided by Jehovah) falling on David, the son of Jesse, a Bethlehemite of the tribe of Judah.

Samuel's Choice of David as Saul's Successor.

It is not quite easy to discover the motives which, humanly speaking, occasioned the selection, though two reasons may have been influential. In the first place, David seems to have been much more open to religious impressions than Saul; and religious enthusiasm was an important factor in national wars at this epoch. And secondly, the political outlook, and the relatively advantageous situation of Judah for a prolonged struggle against the Philistines may have counted for much. Judah, though nearer Philistia than Ephraim or Benjamin, was more defensible, its hills having an outlying rampart in the Shephelah (see p. 33), so that in the event of the centre of Palestine being overrun by the foe, the hill country of Judah might enable a protracted resistance to be maintained.

David and Saul.

Two conflicting accounts are preserved of David's first introduction to Saul. The one which has most claim to be regarded as the older and more trustworthy represents him as having been summoned to the royal court on the strength of the military reputation which by this time he had acquired, and of his skill in music (the latter being calculated to give relief to the king who had developed symptoms of melancholia). The young warrior married Saul's daughter Michal, and a devoted friendship sprang up between him and Jonathan, the king's eldest son. The popular enthusiasm, however, which his achievements in the field aroused, excited the jealousy of the gloomy and suspicious monarch, who even sought his life. Saul's hostility eventually drove David to find a refuge for himself in the wilder parts of Judah, whilst placing his parents under the care of the king of Moab. At Adullam, in the Shephelah, he gathered round him a band of freebooters who lived by their swords; and in the course of subsequent wanderings in the wilderness of Maon (south of Judah) he made more than one marriage alliance with Judæan families, his first wife, Saul's daughter, having been meanwhile taken from him by her father and given to another. He was not, however, always safe in Judah; and in the last resort he put himself under the protection of Achish, king of Gath, and became his vassal. The town of Ziklag was assigned him as an abode; and from thence he made expeditions against the desert tribes, such as the Amalekites, that

harassed the more civilized districts near them. When the Philistines prepared a campaign against Israel in order to command the Plain of Esdraelon, where the road from Egypt to Damascus and the east descended to the Jordan (p. 33), he was summoned by Achish to join him, but was saved from having to serve against his own countrymen by the Philistine officers, who objected to his presence with the army on the ground of his possible treachery. On his return to Ziklag he found it raided and burnt. After having pursued and chastised the raiders, he received, on his return thither again, the news of Saul's defeat and death in a battle against the Philistines at Gilboa, the news being brought, according to the most probable account, by an Israelite soldier who had escaped from the field (see i. 6-10, note).

David's Reign over Judah.

The tidings led him to take prompt steps to secure the sovereignty, if not over the whole of Israel, at least over Judah. Though, owing to his previous ambiguous relations with the Philistines, he seems to have been a little doubtful of his reception among his countrymen, he proceeded to Hebron, having before this conciliated the elders (or sheikhs) of the tribe by a judicious distribution of the spoils of the Amalekites. His fame as a warrior, his blood relationship, his marriage connexions, the resentment felt for his persecution by Saul, and the support of the priest Abiathar, who had joined him in his wanderings, secured for him the favour of the people, and he was proclaimed king over the southern tribe. David's age at this time was 30. The date of his accession can only be approximately determined, but *circa* 1017 B.C. is sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes (see p. 50).

The Kingdom of Eshbaal (Ishbosheth).

The subsequent course of events is unfortunately wrapped in much obscurity. At Hebron he remained $7\frac{1}{2}$ years, without (seemingly) having sundered his previous relations with the Philistines. His position was possibly that of a tributary prince. Meanwhile, an attempt was made, after the rout at Gilboa, by Abner, Saul's cousin and lieutenant, to place upon his throne Eshbaal¹ (or Ishbosheth), one of Saul's surviving sons. The seat of government was fixed on the other side of Jordan, at Mahanaim. The Jordan was always a serious barrier between the eastern and western halves of Palestine; and Abner, by establishing Eshbaal there, was able to consolidate a rival kingdom to Judah, with less risk of interruption than if he had placed the new capital on the opposite side of the river. From Mahanaim authority was claimed for Saul's son over such portions of his father's shattered kingdom

¹ See on ii. 8.

as were not under the rule of David or of the Philistines. The occupation of Mahanaim itself made him master of Gilead, and the historian represents him as king over his own tribe of Benjamin, the related tribe of Ephraim, the Plain of Esdraelon, and (probably) the tribe of Asher (see on ii. 9). If he was really in possession of Esdraelon, it must have been in consequence of successes gained by Abner over the Philistines, for the control of the plain and of the road through it was the object which the Philistines had in view in fighting the battle of Gilboa. Probably, however, the historian has disguised the true position of affairs; for, with the Hebrews split into two rival states, the Philistines are scarcely likely to have been driven from the trade route of which Saul, before the division of the kingdom, could not dispossess them. It is possible, indeed, that it was with the assent of the Philistines that Eshbaal's elevation to the throne of his father was effected: they may well have been contented to allow Saul's dynasty to rule over Israel in name, so long as they enjoyed the reality of power. Perhaps, too, the removal of the capital to the east of Jordan was one of the conditions imposed by them, for there any development of national strength on the part of the Israelites would be hampered by their jealous neighbours in Moab and Ammon.¹

Abner and David.

So far as the history records events, it was only with the forces of Judah that Abner, as Eshbaal's general, came into conflict. Neither side seems to have been anxious for an appeal to arms; but a chance encounter at Gibeon between Abner's troops and David's under Joab, David's nephew, brought about a general engagement, in which Abner's forces were badly beaten. In the pursuit Asahel, brother of Joab, was killed by Abner, his death occasioning a blood feud between the latter and Joab. The battle at Gibeon was followed by prolonged hostilities, resulting in the weakening of Eshbaal's power and the strengthening of David's. Abner seems to have realized that he was the leader of a failing cause; and a remonstrance by his master, which he construed as an insult, was turned by him into an excuse for making overtures to David for the transfer to him of Eshbaal's kingdom. As a preliminary condition David insisted that Abner should procure the restitution to him of his former wife Michal, with a view to appearing before the northern tribes as the son-in-law of Saul. When the condition was fulfilled, Abner paid a secret visit to Hebron, during Joab's absence, to arrange for the acceptance of David as king by the rest of Israel. These negotiations, however, were nearly wrecked by Joab, who, on learning of Abner's visit, went after him and treacherously assassinated him; and if it had

¹ Cp. Kittel, *History of the Hebrews* (E. T.), ii., p. 17

not been for David's tact in at once dissociating himself from the crime, the sympathies of the northern section of the nation would have been estranged, and the amalgamation of the two kingdoms prevented. As it was, David's fine instinct saved the situation. The only remaining obstacle to a reunion of the severed portions of the Hebrew people was removed by the subsequent murder of Eshbaal, after a reign of seven years, by two of his captains, Gibeonites by race, apparently out of revenge for the slaughter of their fellow-countrymen by Saul in defiance of the compact once made by Joshua. Consequently, when the representatives of Israel met, they formally offered the crown to David; and a charter of the respective rights of the sovereign and his subjects having been ratified, David was solemnly anointed king of the whole people, *circa* 1010 B.C.

The remaining Sons of Saul.

There were still, however, some survivors of the house of Saul, whose fortunes may be noticed here. One of these, Meribaal (or Mephibosheth),¹ the son of Jonathan, who was a cripple, was befriended by David for his father's sake. The fate of certain others was very tragic. The occurrence of a three years' famine was interpreted, according to the religious ideas of the time, as a sign of Divine displeasure; and the cause was represented to be Saul's infraction, already alluded to, of the ancient covenant with the Gibeonites. To expiate the crime, seven of Saul's descendants, on the demand of the Gibeonites, were executed, David preserving Meribaal from being included among the victims. Whether by the death of these men all representatives of Saul's family except Meribaal were put out of the way does not appear. No doubt, David, in permitting the slaughter of so many of Saul's posterity, could plead the requirements of Jehovah (as they were understood in that age); but since the removal of some possible rivals to the throne was much to his advantage, the incident not unnaturally occasioned among adherents of the house of Saul much bitter feeling (see xvi. 8).

David's Reign over All Israel. The Expulsion of the Philistines.

A new and splendid chapter of Hebrew history opens with David's accession to the throne of a united nation; but a good deal of rough work had to be done before he became sovereign in more than name. The most pressing task was the expulsion from the land of its foreign invaders. The Philistines saw at once that David's advancement to Saul's throne seriously threatened their supremacy, and they lost no time in seeking to cope with the changed situation. They attacked him before his preparations for resistance were complete, and he had to retire to his old

¹ See ix. 6.

stronghold at Adullam. In the fighting that ensued there, he seems to have been more than once in serious danger (xxii. 9-12); but disaster was averted by the extraordinary prowess of some of his warriors. Failing to assail him successfully at Adullam, the Philistines endeavoured to cut him off from the northern part of the kingdom by occupying the Valley of Rephaim, which seems to be the modern *Wādy Surar*, stretching from the Shephelah towards Jerusalem. Here he gained two successive victories. On the second occasion he got on the flank of his enemies, and attacking them from the direction of Gibeon (see on v. 25), chased them down the valley of Aijalon. Further details of the struggle are lacking; but it resulted in the defeat of the Philistines, and either in the capture of an important city (perhaps Gath) or else in the destruction of the control exercised by it over a number of neighbouring places (viii. 1).

Jerusalem Captured and made the Capital of the Kingdom.

The successes gained over the Philistines enabled David to undertake the reduction of a place which had long been a barrier between different parts of the kingdom and hindered the cohesion of the northern and southern tribes. This was Jerusalem, a fortress 20 miles north of Hebron, still held by the native Jebusites. Situated on a triangle of rock, with the apex facing south, and surrounded on all sides except on the north by deep ravines, in position it was well-nigh impregnable. The very confidence, however, with which the advantages of its site inspired its inhabitants, brought about its fall. By the discovery of some subterranean shaft communicating with its water supply, access was gained to the citadel, and its capture effected. David, as soon as it was in his hands, determined to make it his capital. It was a bold and farsighted act of statesmanship. Experience had shown that if the two sections of the kingdom were to be held together, a capital more centrally situated than Hebron was required; and both the position and natural strength of Jerusalem marked it out for this distinction. The policy of transferring to it the status hitherto enjoyed by Hebron was fully justified by its results. Jerusalem came to acquire in the affections of the Hebrew people a secure place which none of the vicissitudes through which it passed ever succeeded in shaking. David largely contributed to this by investing the city with the religious associations attaching at the time to the Ark, which he proceeded to remove to it. This ancient symbol of Jehovah's Presence, ever since its restoration by the Philistines (who had previously captured it at the battle of Ebenezer), had remained at Keriath-jearim, and from this place, in spite of an untoward incident on the way (vi. 1-10), which for a while deferred the execution of the king's design, it was transported to the new capital. For the tent in which it had hitherto

been kept, David desired to substitute a stone temple; and was only prevented from doing so by the inspired counsel of the prophet Nathan (vii. 5 f.).

David's Internal and External Policy

With a city of so many political and military advantages as his metropolis, David entered upon a larger career. He built for himself a palace, obtaining materials and workmen from the Phœnician city of Tyre (which access to Joppa, in consequence of the defeat of the Philistines, enabled him to import): and after the fashion of Oriental monarchs, he increased his harem (v. 13-16). He doubtless gave to his kingdom a more complete organization than it previously had, though details, beyond lists of his chief officials (viii. 15-18, xx. 23-26), are wanting. He was the first to introduce into Israel a system of forced labour,¹ which was perhaps in part connected with the building of fortresses in different districts of the country. This, which must have pressed heavily upon his subjects by withdrawing them from the cultivation of their lands, was such an unpopular measure that in the time of his grandson it split the kingdom in two (*I Kings* xii.). Internal consolidation was accompanied by a vigorous foreign policy, dictated by a desire to extend and secure his frontiers. With regard to the foreign wars, only a brief and possibly, in some respects, an exaggerated summary of these results has been preserved. Having safeguarded his borders on the west by the overthrow of the Philistines, he entered upon a series of campaigns against the states on the east, north-east, and south. The first was directed against Moab, a country with which he was connected by descent, since his ancestress, Ruth, was a Moabitess (*Ruth* iv. 18-22), and in which he had placed for safety his father and mother when he was a fugitive from Saul (*I Sam.* xxii. 3-4). Possibly by this time there had been a change of ruler, resulting in less friendly relations.² Probably the war next in order was that waged against the Ammonites. Of this alone some particulars are given. It was provoked by an outrageous insult perpetrated by the Ammonite king upon the persons of David's ambassadors, who had been sent to congratulate him upon his accession. Ammon sought aid from Zobah, Rehob, Maacah, and Tob (pp. 38, 136), countries which were doubtless ready to unite against a people whose rise to power threatened their own security; but in a great battle before Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, Joab and his brother Abishai defeated the forces of the allies. It took two campaigns to reduce Rabbah; and the subjugation of the Ammonites was followed by further hostilities against Zobah and the other confederate states. These campaigns were completely successful, though the king of Zobah

¹ This is implied in xx. 24 mg.

² For another explanation see on viii. 2.

made a vigorous resistance, obtaining aid both from the Syrians of Damascus and from those beyond the Euphrates. The kingdom of Damascus itself suffered a serious reverse at David's hands, and he seems to have been able to establish political agents, if not a garrison,¹ in the city. In the south the Edomites were reduced (the conquest of Edom giving Israel two ports on the gulf of Akabah, Elath and Eziongeber); and the raiding Amalekites were kept in check. Many of these campaigns were attended by various barbarities, the Israelites in their methods of conducting war being in no way superior to their neighbours (viii. 2, xii. 31 (though see note), I Kings xi. 15, 16).

The Census.

It was probably at the conclusion of these wars that David, with a view to ascertaining and still further improving his military resources, took a census of the people (ch. xxiv.). This was apparently a register of all men of military age. Hitherto the nucleus of the army had been the royal bodyguard of mercenary troops (p. 52), which was reinforced by temporary levies in times of emergency. The enumeration of the nation's manhood was probably intended to form the basis of a scheme of universal service; but it was so repugnant to popular feeling that a pestilence which broke out at the time was attributed to Divine resentment against the author of the measure.

David's Sin and his Sorrows.

The remainder of David's reign, peaceful as regards its foreign relations, was disturbed by domestic troubles, leading ultimately to civil war. The king himself was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his officers, and the virtual murder of her husband; and these heinous crimes were followed by acts of outrage and fratricide perpetrated by two of his sons. It was during the Ammonite war that David's seduction of Bathsheba occurred, and it was the siege operations against Rabbah that afforded David a convenient opportunity for getting rid of the injured husband.

Amnon's Crime.

David's sensuality was only too faithfully imitated by his eldest son Amnon, who outraged his half-sister Tamar, and was subsequently done to death by order of Absalom, Tamar's own brother. To escape the consequences of this deed of bloodshed, Absalom took refuge at the court of his grandfather, the king of Geshur, and was long unable to obtain David's permission to return. Joab, however, perhaps fearing foreign complications from this estrangement, eventually procured, by

¹ The word used in viii. 6 is ambiguous (see note).

means of a stratagem, the prince's recall; and at last brought about a reconciliation between father and son.

Absalom's Rebellion.

Absalom no sooner found himself restored to favour than he formed a resolution, inspired partly by ambition and partly by revenge, to dethrone his father. After fostering discontent by representing that the king was responsible for delay in the administration of justice he proceeded to Hebron (where the inhabitants were perhaps discontented owing to the elevation of Jerusalem to the position of metropolis), under pretext of a vow; and there, aided by Ahithophel, his father's trusted adviser, he set on foot an extensive conspiracy. Before David was aware that treason was at work, he learnt of the defection of a large part of his subjects; and, taken by surprise, he had no resource but to evacuate Jerusalem and seek refuge on the other side of the Jordan, making Eshbaal's former capital, Mahanaim, his place of retreat. He refused to allow the Ark to accompany him, possibly thinking that its presence in Jerusalem might protect the city, and knowing that, in its custodians, the priests, he had a useful intelligence department there. The only countermove that he made was to bid his counsellor Hushai pretend to join Absalom in order to counteract any advice that might be given to Absalom by Ahithophel. The king, in the course of his withdrawal from Jerusalem, was grossly insulted by a Benjamite called Shimei; but on reaching the trans-Jordanic district he found many sympathizers, who provided him with supplies. Amongst these was Ziba, the steward of Meribaal, who charged his master with disaffection, and was rewarded by the gift of the latter's patrimony. Meanwhile Absalom had moved forward to occupy Jerusalem; and at a council held there Ahithophel urged Absalom to dispatch a mobile force at once to overwhelm the king before he had time to organize any defence. Hushai countered this advice by arguing that such a force, being comparatively small, might meet with a disaster which would fatally discourage Absalom's adherents; and recommended delay until a large army could be mustered, sufficient to overcome all resistance. This specious proposal was adopted; and Ahithophel, seeing that the cause for which he had sold his honour was as good as lost, committed suicide. Absalom's decision was conveyed to David by the latter's spies; and the king was able to make preparations to meet the deferred attack. When it was eventually delivered, Absalom entrusted his forces to Amasa, a relative of David's; whilst David's forces were committed to Joab and two other officers, who were strictly charged to spare Absalom. The engagement took place among the forests of Gilead; Absalom's troops were routed; and the prince himself, flying from the field, was caught in the low

branches of a tree, and there dispatched by Joab, to the intense distress of the king, his father.

The King's Restoration and Sheba's Revolt.

The collapse of the rebellion left David with a difficult situation to deal with, for the unity of the nation, which he had striven so hard to cement, was for the moment shattered, and his own tribe had been the centre of the conspiracy against him. Very wisely he was in no hurry to return to Jerusalem, but waited for a reaction to set in amongst the rebels. His next step was less politic. When proposals were made to bring the king home, the tribe of Judah hung back; but David, thinking to bind his fellow-tribesmen to him afresh, intimated his wish that they should be the first to recall him; and resenting Joab's act in killing Absalom, promised Amasa the command of the army in Joab's stead. The men of Judah were not slow to take the hint given them; and to reinstate themselves in the king's favour, forestalled the more distant of the other tribes in escorting him back from the Jordan to Jerusalem before they could assemble. The northern tribes not unnaturally took umbrage at this; and so fierce a dispute ensued that a Ben-jamite named Sheba attempted a second rebellion. David promptly ordered Amasa to take measures to deal with it; but it was Joab who really crushed it, for, assassinating his supplanter Amasa, he pursued Sheba, who obtained little support; and when the latter threw himself into Abel-beth-maacah (near Dan), Joab easily prevailed upon the inhabitants to save their city from assault by putting the rebel to death. With this incident the account of David's reign in *II Samuel* concludes, the history of the king's closing days being related in *I Kings* i., ii. His death occurred about 977 B.C., at the age of 70.

XI.

The Character of David.

Of David's capacity as a statesman there cannot be two opinions. The fact that he created out of a political chaos a secure and well-ordered kingdom sufficiently attests his ability. He had a peculiar genius for sovereignty, which displayed itself not only in a perfect comprehension of what the times required, but in a quick and sympathetic insight into the mind of his people. He was endowed with great natural penetration for understanding, and singular resourcefulness for dealing with, both persons and situations, even though his impetuosity of temper sometimes made him pass hasty judgments. But his greatness as a monarch is not necessarily the measure of his moral stature as a man. This in some respects

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was not above the common standards of the age. His passions were strong and ill-controlled; and when his desires were kindled, he allowed no obstacle to stand in the way of their gratification. His adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah have left indelible stains upon his memory. And his sensuality was accompanied by other faults, for he was guilty of cruelty to subjugated enemies, of duplicity towards Shimei (whose offence he appeared to condone, but did not really forgive, and eventually revenged through the agency of Solomon), and of ingratitude to Joab (who, in spite of his vindictiveness, insubordination, and masterfulness, had served him well and faithfully). Towards his worthless sons, Amnon and Absalom, he displayed a foolish and culpable tenderness, which, following upon the evil example he set them, made his court the scene of a series of horrible crimes. Yet in spite of his great fall, his defects of temper, and his parental weakness, he possessed a deeply religious disposition. If it is true that passions are but nature, whereas not to repent is corruption, David was certainly free from this last and worst defect. His conscience was sensitive; and when his offences were denounced, he never attempted self-justification, but frankly and penitently admitted his faults. His piety was both humble and sincere. His capacity for friendship was remarkable; and he both displayed and inspired affection in a rare degree. His love for Jonathan was as steadfast as it was warm; and was as warmly and steadfastly returned. Nor was his personal magnetism felt less by his subordinates than by his equals, for the enthusiastic service which he could command from his soldiers is attested by more than one striking story (xv. 21, xxi. 17, xviii. 3). With all his sins and shortcomings he possessed both intellectual and moral qualities of a remarkably high order; and the record of his life, sullied though it is, entitles him to rank amongst the foremost kings of antiquity.

XII.

Chronology.

The dating of events in early Hebrew history is very difficult, partly because the Hebrews had no fixed era from which to reckon dates, and partly because, during the unsettled period prior to the establishment of the monarchy, it must have been impossible for chronological, like other, details to be preserved and transmitted with any accuracy. From a comparison of the Biblical account of the Exodus with information obtained from the Egyptian monuments, the date of that event can be settled with some plausibility at about 1250 or 1230 B.C. But it is impossible to construct a scheme of chronology for the times of Joshua and the Judges by

using in connexion with this date the figures contained in the book of *Judges*, since the number 40 and its multiples occur amongst them so frequently¹ that they cannot be regarded as trustworthy. On the other hand, the figures representing the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah appear to be deserving of greater confidence, though they are by no means free from error; and if they are corrected by reference to the synchronisms afforded by the Assyrian inscriptions, and a calculation is made backwards from 587 B.C., the date of the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, the year 1017 will be reached as the accession-year of David. This date can only be considered approximate; but the margin of error is not likely to be great. The figure 40 given as the length of the reigns of both David and Solomon is suspicious; but probably in the case of David is not very incorrect; so that 977 is approximately the date of his death.

The date of various events within the reign of David can similarly be determined only approximately. Since David ruled at Hebron for 7½ years before the transfer of his throne to Jerusalem, the latter event must have occurred about 1010 (v. 4-5); and since both Amnon and Absalom were born at Hebron (iii. 2-3), the dates of their birth were perhaps 1016 and 1014 respectively. If it is assumed that Amnon was about 20 when he wronged Tamar, and Absalom was the same age when two years afterwards (xiii. 23) he murdered Amnon, these incidents occurred in 996 and 994 respectively. As Absalom was in exile for three years (xiii. 38), was excluded from his father's court for two more (xiv. 28), and formed his conspiracy four years after the reconciliation with his father (xv. 7, see note), the date of his rebellion will be 985. The following table will then give the relative dates of the principal incidents in David's reign:

David king over Judah at Hebron	...	...	B.C.	1017
Birth of Amnon	...	...		1016
Birth of Absalom	...	...		1014
David king over all Israel at Jerusalem	...	...		1010-1009
Foreign wars	...	...	between	1008-995?
David's adultery with Bathsheba	...	...		996?
Amnon's outrage	...	...		996
Absalom's murder of Amnon	...	...		994
Absalom's rebellion and death	...	...		985
David's death	...	...		977

The relation of David's reign to certain important events in ancient history may be seen from the following table. The first few dates are largely conjectural, and many of the others are only approximate.

The Greek Mycenæan period	...	...	B.C.	1500?
The Exodus	...	...		1250-1200

¹ See *Judg.* iii. 11, 30, v. 31, viii. 28, xiii. 1.

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The Fall of Troy (traditional date)	1184
David's accession	1017
Solomon's accession	977
Homer	900-800?
The Foundation of Carthage	814
The First Olympiad	776
The Foundation of Rome (traditional date) ...	753
The Fall of Samaria	722
The Fall of Nineveh	607
The Battle of Marathon	590
The Fall of Jerusalem	587
The Fall of Babylon	538
The Return of the Jews from Exile	537
The expulsion of the Kings from Rome	509
The beginning of the Peloponnesian War ...	431
The overthrow of the Persian Empire by Alexander	331

XIII.

Military and Civil Organization in the Reign of David.

(a) MILITARY.

The Mercenaries.

Prior to David's reign the Israelites had no permanent military organization. A defensive force could be got together under stress of hostile aggression, but the nation was so loosely united that its available strength had no coherence. Saul, like his predecessors the Judges, had to depend for the defence of his realm upon such patriotic efforts as the pressure of circumstances or his own personal influence could evoke. But this method ceased to be adequate to meet the political necessities of the time, in face of a determined enemy such as the Philistines, who, unlike the Midianites, Moabites, and other peoples on the eastern frontier, did not content themselves with more or less prolonged incursions, but made a sustained effort to dominate the country, and to keep its inhabitants in a permanent condition of inferiority. In I xiii. 19-22 we have an impressive, though possibly overcoloured, picture of the depressed and abject state to which in Saul's day the nation was at times reduced. When David succeeded to Saul's throne, he made it his purpose to create a force which might cope effectually with the disciplined and well-equipped armies of his foes. At first, indeed, he was in no position to shake off the yoke which the Philistines had fastened upon the land. As has been seen, the nation was divided into two

mutually hostile sections, Eshbaal (Ishbosheth) ruling over one part, with his capital at Mahanaim, and David governing the other, with his capital at Hebron. David, indeed, was probably a vassal of the Philistines during the seven years of his reign at Hebron. Even when he became king of the united nation, he must have found its resources greatly exhausted. It was not, however, upon such national forces as he could enlist at a crisis that he relied for the security of his dominions and the vindication of its liberties. He saw that what was wanted was a small but permanent body of trained soldiers, who, on occasions of need, would serve as the nucleus of a larger army, and stiffen the raw levies which he would from time to time have to call to arms. He had the advantage of possessing already, before he came to the throne, a band of soldiers of fortune who gathered to him when he was an outlaw. These men were largely recruited from the outlying districts of Philistia, and were attached to him by personal ties alone. They were known as *Cherethites* and *Pelethites*, the first name probably being derived from *Crete*, the locality whence, it would seem, the Philistines had migrated into Palestine, and the second being a corruption of *Philistines* (see viii. 18, note). Their commander was Benaiah. At a later period there was also joined to them a body of *Gittites*, commanded by Ittai. This force, which constituted the king's bodyguard, and was styled *The Mighty Men*, was probably augmented by the enlistment in it of other foreign mercenaries, for among David's most distinguished warriors there occur the names of an Ammonite, a Hittite, and a Zobahite.¹ The number of these "guards" cannot be accurately determined; for though David shortly before his accession had only 600 men with him (I xxiii. 13, xxx. 9), at the time of Absalom's revolt the Gittites alone numbered as many (II xv. 18). This supplied David with a small standing army which was always ready to be despatched immediately to any field of action, and could be reinforced afterwards by such additional troops as he had time and opportunity to muster.

The Military "Orders."

To encourage the ardour and devotion of his soldiers David established (seemingly during his rule at Hebron²) two military "Orders," advancement to which was obtainable only by the performance of some exceptional deed of personal prowess. The official title of the lower of these Orders was *The Thirty*, though this figure was either not strictly adhered to, or else the list of those included in it embraces the names of all who were at any time members of it, successive vacancies in it having been filled by

¹ I *Chron.* xi. 46 adds a Moabite.

² This is inferred from the fact that Asahel, who was slain before David became king of the whole nation, was included in one of the Orders.

promotions. The Order had its own special commanders—Abishai and Benaiah. Superior in rank to *The Thirty* was the Order of *The Three*. These were distinguished by the performance of deeds of valour even more notable than those which rendered the doers eligible for admission to the Thirty.

The Militia and the Methods of Warfare.

The national levies, constituting *The Host*, were organized in divisions known as *thousands* and *hundreds*. These terms must not be understood according to their numerical value, but seem to have denoted sections of tribes (cp. *Mic.* v. 2, *Judg.* vi. 15), each consisting of a certain number of households. The commander of the whole army was Joab, David's nephew, a man of pre-eminent military capacity, though his name, rather curiously, does not appear in either of the two Orders of chivalry. On a campaign the army might be divided into two or three separate corps, each under its own general, as the disposition of the foe or other circumstances suggested (*x.* 9, 10, *xviii.* 2). Hostilities were usually suspended during the winter, when the force returned to its base; and the temporary levies were dismissed to their homes, to be summoned again at the return of the spring.¹ Military signals were given by means of rams' horns (*ii.* 28 note, *xv.* 10, *xviii.* 16). Siege operations figured prominently in the warfare of David's time; since an army, when defeated in the field, generally retired into a city and closed its gates. When the attacking force was unable, by ravaging the surrounding country, to induce a beleaguered garrison to risk an engagement in the open, it could either try to reduce it by famine or by thirst (through the capture of its water-supply, *xii.* 27), or to attempt to breach the walls by battering-rams or other military engines.² But that fortresses were not easily taken by means of such engines as the Hebrews possessed at this time is suggested by David's fear lest Sheba, by escaping into one, might defy capture (*xx.* 6). As the Israelite wars were believed to be conducted under the sanction of Jehovah as the national divinity, soldiers on a campaign were regarded as consecrated, and required to observe such restrictions as were appropriate to men in that condition (*I xxi.* 4, cp. *II xi.* 11). The number of troops available in war cannot be determined with any certainty. The figures given in ancient authors are rarely to be fully trusted, for they are particularly liable to be exaggerated alike in the original sources and in transmission; and that those which occur in the O.T. are not more trustworthy than others may be inferred from the differences frequently observable between the numerical statements made in regard to the same occasions in the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*

¹ See *xi.* 1 (though cp. note), *I Kings xx.* 22, 26.

² See *xx.* 15.

on the one hand and *Chronicles* on the other. The register of men fit for military service, which was compiled in the course of the census instituted by David, is declared in xxiv. 9 to have included 1,300,000: on the credibility of these figures see on xxiv. 9.

Military Equipment.

The defensive equipment of a Hebrew soldier consisted of a *coat of mail*, a *helmet*, and a *shield*. The material of which the last was made is not known: the fact that shields could be burnt (*Ezek.* xxxix. 9) suggests that they often consisted of a wooden or wicker frame covered with leather; but it is likely that they were sometimes of metal, especially those carried by officers of rank who are described as having armour-bearers. The customary offensive weapons were the *spear* (which had a spike at the butt), and the *sword*; and a *dagger* may have occasionally been worn (see xx. 8-10). Another weapon was the *bow*; but though most soldiers were acquainted with its use, the archers of an army probably formed a distinct body. The arms of a slain foe were generally taken as a trophy by his conqueror (ii. 21, cp. I xxxi. 9). *Chariots*, though extensively employed by Israel's enemies, were not much in use among the Israelites themselves. The heart of the country west of the Jordan was too hilly to afford great scope for them; and though the Plain of Esdraelon, when cleared of the Philistines, was more suitable for the evolutions of a chariot force, and David, after the Syrian wars, reserved a certain number of chariot horses from those taken from the enemy, yet the proportion of those kept to those destroyed shows that chariots were not well adapted to the conditions under which the Israelites usually fought.

(b) CIVIL.

Local and Central Authority.

Comparatively little is known of David's civil administration, no account of it being furnished except a brief list of the chief State officials. It is only possible to form a rough idea of its character by putting together a few scattered allusions in the historical narrative, and by contrasting with pre-existent conditions the changes which the kingship must have introduced. In pre-monarchical times, the system of government was of a patriarchal character. The duties of maintaining order and of dispensing justice in the various localities were discharged by the heads of the families (*elders*) resident in them; whilst questions of importance affecting the nation collectively were considered and decided, when they arose, at meetings of such elders (v. 3, xix. 11). The institution of monarchical rule in Israel necessarily modified considerably these arrangements. Authority became centralized; the king chose his own counsellors; and he himself became the ultimate source of

justice, to whom litigants could carry their causes. At the same time it is not likely that previous local tribunals were altogether abolished. At a later period the elders of a city tried persons charged with offences (I *Kings* xxi. 8 f.); and on the occasion when David was made king over all Israel, a charter was obtained by the representative elders of the northern tribes, by which presumably certain restrictions were placed upon the royal power, and local liberties conserved (iii. 21). It is clear, however, that the king, with a strong body of his guards at his command, must have been in a position to assert his will without much check, if he was of an arbitrary disposition; and that for greater security against foreign foes, the people surrendered much of their earlier freedom, the only protection against royal tyranny being, in the last resort, armed revolt.

The Administration of Justice and the System of Forced Labour.

The chief of the many services which David, as king of all Israel, rendered to his people was the weakening, at least for a time, of the tribal friction which up to that date had impaired the union, and consequently the strength, of the nation. One change which promoted this end was the removal of the seat of government to Jerusalem, which became the capital of the whole realm. Inasmuch as it was a city which the absence of earlier tribal associations made neutral soil, it was not likely to excite the same jealousy, by reason of David's choice, as some other places might have done, had they been thus distinguished. Another benefit resulting from the consolidation of the regal power was the establishment of a royal court of justice (xiv. 3 f., xv. 2). By taking the administration of justice into his own hands David did something towards bringing certain primitive social usages into closer accord with equity. An ancient custom, for instance, by which justice must as often have been violated as vindicated was that which made it the duty of the relations of a slaughtered man to avenge his death by killing the homicide.¹ The king, by hearing appeals and by having at his disposal sufficient force to compel respect for his decisions, was able to prevent the perpetration of serious wrong (xiv. 11). Nevertheless by administering justice at the capital single-handed, instead of delegating some of his authority to deputies, he seems to have caused discontent in consequence of the delay occasioned to suitors (xv. 3). Another measure, less prudent in its conception than those just mentioned, was perhaps designed with a view to developing the resources, and strengthening the defences, of his kingdom, as well as adorning and beautifying his new metropolis. This was a system of *forced labour* imposed upon his subjects. According to I *Chron.* xxii. 2, only foreigners were employed in the labour gangs, but in II *Samuel* there is nothing to suggest that any distinction in

¹ See xiv. 6, 7.

this respect was observed between natives and foreigners. Such personal service was perhaps exacted in place of taxation; but to judge from the opposition which the system roused in later times (I Kings xii. 4, 18), it was probably unpopular from the beginning.

State Officials.

With regard to the officials who were in charge of various State departments there are two lists, which differ very slightly from one another. Taken together these lists comprise—

1. *A Recorder* (or *King's Remembrancer*), who kept the sovereign in mind of State business requiring his attention, and probably advised him upon it. This office was held by *Jehoshaphat*, son of *Ahilud*.

2. *A Scribe* or *Secretary*, who drew up and kept all official documents. Two names are given in II Samuel in connexion with this office, viz., *Seraiah* (viii. 17) and *Sheva* (xx. 25), whilst a third, *Shisha*, occurs in I Kings iv. 3. The fact that *Seraiah* appears as *Shavsha* in I Chron. xviii. 16 makes it probable that one individual is denoted by all the variants, but leaves his real name uncertain. That both the Remembrancer and the Secretary were important ministers of state appears from the fact that they are represented in II Kings xviii. 18, 37 as conducting critical negotiations.

3. *A Superintendent of the Labour Gangs*, who organized, and had charge of, the labourers who, under the compulsory system already explained, were employed upon various public works. The occupant of this office was *Adoram* (or *Adoniram*).

There were also in addition a *Privy Council*, of which *Ahithophel*, described as David's counsellor (xv. 12), must have been an important member; whilst a confidential adviser of the Sovereign was styled *the King's Friend*, a title given to *Hushai* (xv. 37 xvi. 16).

XIV.

Social Customs.

In seeking to form an idea of the social conditions of the people under David as compared with those prevailing under Saul, we are largely dependent upon probable inferences. It is certain, however, that the greater security of the kingdom which was ensured by David's successes against external enemies, the development of commerce with the neighbouring Tyrians (such as is implied in v. 11), and the accumulation of wealth that accrued from foreign conquests, must have had the effect of greatly raising the general standard of comfort. Life and property which, during the occupation of the land by the Philistines, were frequently

endangered, were made safe; residents in lonely districts were not so liable as before to have their farms devastated by marauders, and their families massacred or taken captives; and the energies of the nation found opportunity for the improvement of agriculture and the extension of trade.

Slaves.

The increase of Israel's power at the expense of their neighbours must have multiplied the number of slaves in the country. Native Israelites were sometimes driven by need to sell themselves or their children into slavery;¹ but probably the bulk of slaves were captives taken in war. The Cushite mentioned in xviii. 21 was presumably an Ethiopian who had perhaps been purchased. Female bond-servants doubtless often became the concubines or secondary wives of their masters. Males would be chiefly employed on the land; and possibly the number on a considerable estate may be estimated by those possessed by Ziba, the steward of Meribaal, who is represented as having twenty servants (ix. 10).

Agriculture.

About the principal occupations, the style of dwellings, the mode of dress, and the customary usages of the people at this period much information can be derived from incidental allusions occurring in the course of the narrative. *Agriculture* was the chief pursuit; and much labour was spent upon the cultivation not only of cornfields but also of vineyards and oliveyards. Corn was produced mainly in the maritime plain, and in the valleys that stretched up to the roots of the Judæan hills. Both *wheat* and *barley* are mentioned amongst the cereals grown, whilst other products of the fields were *beans* and *lentils* (xvii. 28, xxiii. 11, xxiv. 15, note). *Oxen* were habitually used for ploughing, threshing, and ordinary draught work (vi. 6, xxiv. 22). The corn, when cut, was threshed by having heavy wooden sledges, with their underside roughened with nails or flints, dragged over it: the threshing floors were naturally placed on the summits of hills (xxiv. 18), so that the wind might the more easily remove the chaff. *Vineyards* were generally planted on terraces constructed along the slopes of hills (cp. *Isa.* v. 1). The grapes which they produced were either used for making wine, which was a common beverage of the country, or else were dried and converted into raisins (vi. 10, xvi. 1). When it was desired to make wine, the grapes were trodden in a *winepress* (a trough cut in the rock) by men's feet (*Isa.* lxiii. 2), and the juice allowed to flow into a *winevat*, a similar though smaller receptacle at a lower level (*Isa.* v. 2 mg., *Joel* iii. 13). *Oliveyards* yielded olive oil, which was used both for anointing the person (xii. 20) and for lubricating armour (i. 21).

¹ Cp. *Exod.* xxi. 2 f., *Lev.* xxv. 39 f., *Deut.* xv. 12, *Jer.* xxxiv. 14 mg.

Figs were largely grown, and when ripe were dried and pressed into cakes. *Cattle* and *sheep* were extensively reared, especially in Gilead (xvii. 29). Shepherd's were accustomed to lead rather than drive their flocks; and consequently the occupation of the shepherd lent itself readily to metaphors for describing the duties of a leader of men (v. 2, note). The principal animal for riding was the *ass* (xix. 26). *Horses* were used only for drawing military chariots (viii. 4); but people of dignity sometimes rode upon *mules* (xviii. 9). The list of things provided by Barzillai the Gileadite for the comfort of David, when he fled from Jerusalem, affords an idea of the fare procurable on a country estate (xvii. 28, 29). It includes *wheat, barley, meal, parched corn, beans, lentils, honey, butter, cheese* and *sheep*. The refreshments brought by Ziba on the same occasion extend the list, and comprise *bread, raisins, summer fruits, and wine* (xvi. 1). Though luxury was no doubt growing, habits, even in the highest ranks of society, were still homely. The king's daughters employed themselves in domestic tasks (xiii. 6); and in the household of Eshbaal (Ishbosheth) the portress was a woman who had other duties beside those of her office (iv. 6, note). The warmth of the climate made the summer heat oppressive, and persons of leisure were accustomed during the noontide to take a siesta (iv. 5, xi. 2).

Dwellings.

Light is thrown by various incidents related in the book upon the plan of the cities, and the structure of their buildings. The cities were walled (xx. 15) and provided with gates (xviii. 24). Over the gateways, which probably extended both forwards and backwards beyond the breadth of the wall, there was sometimes a chamber, the flat roof of which afforded a convenient lookout for a watchman (xviii. 24). At the entrance of the gate below, justice was administered; meetings of the citizens were held; and groups collected to discuss the news of the day. The houses within the cities, like the towers above the gateways, had flat roofs, which furnished space for walking, sleeping, and other occupations (see on xi. 2). Among the materials used for building, though there can have been no lack of stone, bricks seem to have been included (xii. 31). Within the houses windows were protected from the weather not by glass but by lattice-work. The women of the family had quarters separate from the men (xiii. 2 note).

The Royal Court.

The king's court was constituted on lines of Oriental state, whilst at the same time the life of its inmates, like that of people of humbler station, was marked by features of great simplicity. Polygamy was customary among those Hebrews who could afford more than one wife, so that it was natural that the Sovereign

should have a large harem (iii. 2-5). Besides his wives, he had concubines (iii. 7, xvi. 21) whose status was seemingly that of secondary wives, and did not, according to contemporary habits of thought, involve any immorality. The offspring were probably not regarded as illegitimate, but they had no claim to the throne. In consequence of the number of the king's wives, many of his children were only half-brothers and half-sisters to one another; and there seems to have been no insuperable barrier to the marriage of brothers and sisters whose relationship was not uterine (xiii. 13). The privilege of dining at the royal table was a distinction which the king sometimes bestowed upon those whom he desired to honour for their own sake or their fathers' (ix. 10); and messes of meat from the king's table were also a means of rendering respect to soldiers of renown or other important personages (xi. 8).

Aliens.

No such strict line of division was drawn between persons of Hebrew race and members of other nationalities as grew up in subsequent ages. David himself was descended from a union between an Israelite man and a Moabite woman (*Ruth* iv. 18-22), and among his wives was a daughter of the king of Geshur (iii. 3). Foreigners seem to have had no difficulty in obtaining rights of naturalization; and, as has been seen (p. 52), several were included in the Order of distinguished warriors styled *The Thirty*.

Costume.

Hebrew dress was usually made of wool; but in times of mourning "sackcloth" (iii. 31), a material woven of goat's hair, was substituted. Although the weaving of cloth must have been a regular trade, it was probably also a household occupation practised by the women of the family (see *Prov.* xxxi. 10-31). The Hebrew loom was doubtless simple in construction: among allusions to it is the comparison of a spear-shaft to a weaver's *beam*, which some take to mean the roller upon which the cloth was wound (but see note on xxi. 19). The ordinary male attire consisted of a shirt, and a sleeved tunic fastened round the waist with a girdle, such girdles (it would seem) being sometimes decorated and valuable (xviii. 11). For out-of-doors wear a loose outer robe, with wide sleeves, was assumed, which was left ungirt unless the wearer was engaged in some active pursuit. The feet were shod with sandals. The king, on occasions when it was desirable to mark his rank, wore a diadem and an armlet (i. 10). Female costume in its essential features was very similar to that of men, though the outer robe, reaching to the feet and the wrists (xiii. 18, note), was worn only by ladies of high station. Clothes were washed by being trodden in water, a practice reflected in the name *En-rogel*, "the fountain of the treader (or fuller)."

Social Habits.

On occasions of sorrow, the outward signs of grief were numerous. The ordinary garment was rent, or replaced by sackcloth; and handfuls of ashes were cast upon the head, or the hand was held above it (i. 2, iii. 31, xiii. 19). Abstinence from food and other comforts was also an accompaniment of great sorrow (xii. 16). Much solicitude was shown for the burial of the dead (xxi. 14), the manner in which the body was disposed of being believed to affect for good or ill the dead man's spirit in the nether world. But though the dead were generally buried, instances occur where they were burnt (I xxxi. 12). On the other hand, seasons of rejoicing were celebrated by music and dancing. Among the musical instruments mentioned are *horns, lyres, harps, timbrels* (or *drums*), *rattles* and *cymbals* (vi. 5, see notes). Feasting was a natural accompaniment of merry-makings, for which the annual sheep-shearing afforded a customary occasion (xiii. 24). Such merry-makings must often have been scenes of drunkenness, since the Hebrew word for the feast that was a feature in them means "a drinking-bout" or "carousal" (I xxv. 36, II xiii. 24-28).

Manners in social intercourse were more effusive than is the case among Western peoples. Respect was shown by prostrations on the ground (i. 2, xiv. 22, xviii. 21, 28, xix. 18); and regard or affection even between men by kissing (xiv. 33, xv. 5). Language was marked by the use of vivid metaphor, or by rhetorical hyperbole (xiv. 11, 17, 20). There prevailed a deeply-rooted belief in the effect of uttered blessings and curses; which seem to have been thought of as having an existence independently of the mind of the person who uttered them, and as working themselves out automatically (iii. 29, cp. *Gen.* xxvii. 33-35, *Num.* xxiii. 20).

Medium of Exchange.

Money was not coined at this early period, the purchasing power of the precious metals that formed the currency being determined by weight. Both gold and silver were in circulation, and there were three weight-standards for both metals—the *Shekel*, the *Maneh* (or *Mina*), and the *Talent*. Their intrinsic value in English money was as follows¹ :—

	GOLD.				SILVER.		
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
<i>Shekel</i>	2	1	0	...	0	2	0 nearly
<i>Maneh</i> (<i>Mina</i>)	102	10	0	...	6	16	8
<i>Talent</i>	6150	0	0	...	410	0	0

¹ See Hastings, *DB*, iii., p. 420.

XV.

Religious Beliefs and Practices.

The most cursory reading of the O.T. shows that the religion of Israel, taken as a whole, was marked by many features both of likeness to, and of contrast with, those of other nations. If, for reasons explained below, the Pentateuch is left out of account, it is the books which relate to the earlier periods of history that exhibit most conspicuously the features of likeness, and the books which deal with the later periods that display those of contrast. It follows from this that these two groups of books, when compared with one another, themselves reveal many differences in respect of religious belief and practice. II *Samuel*, which is occupied exclusively with the reign of David, is concerned with an early period of history, and the conditions of religion represented as prevailing in David's time will be best seen in their true light if the ideas and usages mentioned in it (together with a few drawn from other early parts of the Bible) are brought into comparison with those which are found in (a) contemporary religions, (b) later books, or sections of books, in the O.T.

(a) COMPARISON WITH CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS.

1. The Name and Attributes of the National Deity.

The Hebrews, throughout their history, were wont to call the God they worshipped by a personal appellation — *Jahveh*, or (if spelt as pronounced) *Yahweh*, which in ordinary usage was changed to *Jehovah* from a reverential fear of uttering the actual name,¹ the consonants being retained but different vowels substituted. The name *Yahweh* is really part of a verb meaning *to be* or *become*. In *Exod. iii. 14* mg., God is represented as declaring His Name to be *I will be that I will be*, or, in an abbreviated form, *I will be*; and *Jahveh* or *Yahweh* is the same predication expressed in the third person — *He will be*. What God will be is not defined, it being left to the future to reveal it; but the indefiniteness of the statement suggests that God's disclosure of Himself is to be a *progressive* disclosure. The name thus does not emphasize the Divine self-existence or the Divine immutability, but the Divine activity in connexion with human history, and especially (it is understood) in connexion with the future of

¹ It was, perhaps, not merely feelings of reverence that led to abstinence from the employment of the name *Jahveh*. In antiquity the utterance of a deity's name was believed to set in force the power of the god, so that it was deemed very desirable to keep it from becoming known to his people's enemies, lest it should be used to the prejudice of his own nation. The secret name that was identified with the fortunes of Rome (said to have been *Valentia*) was scrupulously concealed for a like reason.

Israel. This, however, is only the sense put upon the name by the Hebrews in historic times. The name is doubtless an ancient one, and may have originally had another signification; e.g., it may have meant "He who breathes" in the wind, or "He who makes to fall" by the lightning stroke,¹ though such explanations can only be conjectural. The sacredness attaching to the Name of God led the Jews to refrain from the use of it in its original form, and to substitute for the vowels which it contained those of the title *Adonai*, "Lord," so that *Jehovah* (or *Yehowah*) has the consonants of one word and the vowels of another.² In place of *Jehovah* the LXX. translators employed *Kύριος*; and this is the origin of the use of the words *The LORD* (printed in small capitals) in the English version.

The Israelites, in thus designating their God by a proper name, resembled the ancient world generally, for (to say nothing of the Greeks, the Romans, and other more distant peoples) their immediate neighbours, the Moabites and Ammonites, styled their deities by the proper names *Chemosh* and *Milcom* respectively. Such a practice must have originally implied a belief in the reality of other gods, from whom it was necessary to distinguish the national God. In point of fact, none of the peoples of the ancient Eastern world thought at this time of denying the existence of the gods of other nations, though they might deem them of inferior power; and the Israelites in this respect did not differ from the rest. This is shown by David's words in I *Sam.* xxvi. 19, *They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods.* Such language reveals no consciousness in current belief that *Jehovah* was more real than other deities (cp. *Judg.* xi. 24); the difference between Him and them was that whilst He had a claim to worship on Israelite soil, they had a similar claim outside Israel's borders. *Jehovah* had probably been the deity of Israel's ancestors in the distant past (*Exod.* iii. 13, 14); had been deserted by Israel for other gods during their servitude in Egypt (*Josh.* xxiv. 14); but had been recalled to their minds by Moses, who in the desert had come in contact with a body of Midianites amongst whom was a Kenite whose daughter Moses married (*Judg.* i. 16 mg.). The Kenites appear to have been worshippers of *Jehovah* (having perhaps derived a knowledge of Him from the Midianites, who are represented as descended from Abraham, *Gen.* xxv. 2); and they had retained His cult whilst the Israelites in Egypt had abandoned it; and on two occasions a Kenite championed the worship of *Jehovah* against the supporters of an alien religion (see *Judg.*

¹ Cp. Hastings, *DB*, ii. 191.

² The fact that the first vowel of *Adonai* appears as *e* in *Jehovah* is due to a particular rule of Hebrew phonetics.

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iv. 17 f., II *Kings* x. 15 f.). The deliverance from Egypt reconverted the Israelites into adherents of Jehovah;¹ and uninterruptedly from that time, in spite of frequent disloyalty on the part of sections of the people, He was recognised to be Israel's national divinity (cp. *Hos.* xi. 1).

The title Baal.

Like other deities in Canaan, Jehovah in early times was called by His people *Baal*. This was not a personal name but a title only, equivalent to *master* or *lord*. That it was really applied to the God of Israel is proved by *Hos.* ii. 16, by the names borne by sons of Saul, Jonathan, and David, who were all worshippers of Jehovah (ii. 8, ix. 6, I *Chron.* xiv. 7), and by the combination of it with *Jah* (a short form of Jehovah) in the name of *Bealiah*, one of David's warriors (I *Chron.* xii. 5). The use of the same title in connexion alike with the God of Israel and with other gods tended to introduce into the worship of the former some of the corruptions practised in the service of the latter; and it was for this reason that by the prophets of Israel the application of it to Jehovah was discouraged.

The Relations between Jehovah and His People.

Between an exclusively national deity and the people that worshipped him it was inevitable that the tie should be regarded as very close. Accordingly, Israel's land was Jehovah's inheritance (II xiv. 16, xxi. 3, cp. II *Kings* v. 17); in Israel's battles against its foes Jehovah took part (II v. 24, cp. I xviii. 17, xxv. 28, *Num.* xxi. 14); and by the help which He rendered it in great crises (as at the Exodus) Jehovah won for Himself a great name (II vii. 23, cp. *Jer.* xxxii. 20). The support afforded by Jehovah to His people was thought to be mediated partly through the signal qualities of mind or body with which He gifted national leaders or champions, and partly through providential occurrences in nature. Thus Saul and David were enabled to do deeds of prowess through the Spirit of Jehovah (I xi. 6, xvi. 13, cp. *Judg.* iii. 10, vi. 34, xi. 29, etc.), whilst Eleazar, one of David's warriors, was Jehovah's agent in saving Israel from a serious disaster (II xxiii. 10). Similarly, natural phenomena, especially of an awe-inspiring character, such as storms and tempests, which sometimes wrought confusion for Israel's enemies, were sent by Him (cp. I vii. 10, *Josh.* x. 11, *Judg.* v. 20); and the rising gale that rustled the tops of the mulberry trees when David was confronted by the Philistines was thought to be a sign that Jehovah was gone out to smite David's foes (II v. 24). But whilst He was the source of good to His people, He was also the Author of the evils that occasionally befell them. As their prosperous fortunes reflected

¹ Cp. *Ps.* lxxxi. 5 mg., where the poet speaks in the name of his nation.

His favour, so national and individual calamities were ascribed to His anger. It was He who bestowed or withheld the rain upon which the fertility of the soil depended (II xxi. 1). He occasioned Uzzah's sudden death, and sent the pestilence which ravaged the people (vi. 6, 7, xxiv. 15). To Israel's belief about Jehovah, and His responsibility for all that happened to them, the Moabites' belief about Chemosh offers a close parallel. Mesha, the king of Moab, in his inscription explains the affliction of Moab by the Israelite king Omri as due to the anger of Chemosh; and the successes subsequently gained over Israel are likewise attributed to Chemosh, who "saved" the Moabite king. It was Chemosh who told him to take certain cities held by the enemy, and it was Chemosh who, by granting him the mastery, "restored" them (see pp. 68, 69). Similar parallels might be adduced from the cuneiform inscriptions, where the victories of the Assyrian kings are ascribed to the favour of Asshur. In seeking to account for the experiences that befell them, the Israelites paid little attention to what we call secondary causes; and explained occurrences as directly due to the immediate action of Jehovah. It is not surprising that, in judging of His motives in particular cases, they often regarded Him as actuated by reasons which seem to us inappropriate and alien to the Divine character. He smote Uzzah for touching the ark, even though it was to prevent its fall, just as He had smitten the men of Bethshemesh for looking into it (I vi. 19); and He sent upon the people the destructive pestilence previously mentioned because David had ascertained the numbers of Israel.

2. The Symbol of Jehovah's Presence—the Ark.

The Presence of Jehovah amongst His people seems not merely to have been symbolized by a wooden chest or Ark, but to have been thought to be attached to it in so intimate a way that where the Ark went, Jehovah was believed to go, and where the Ark stood, there His worshippers, by approaching it, could appear before Him. This conclusion seems virtually put beyond doubt by passages like II vi. 14, 16, and *Num.* x. 35, 36, by the fact that the Ark was taken with the army on military expeditions as a *paladium* in order to ensure victory (I iv. 3-7, II xi. 11, cp. also *Num.* xiv. 44, 45),¹ and by the exclamation of Phinehas' wife, occasioned by the news of its loss when captured by the Philistines, that the Glory had departed from Israel (I iv. 22). But since the Ark itself was only a receptacle, it is probable that it was with something contained in it that the presence of Jehovah was really associated. The statement that it held the two tables of stone on which the ten Commandments were written occurs first in *Deut.* x. 5; but since *Deuteronomy* is dependent largely

¹ Similarly the Philistines brought into battle the images of their gods, v. 21.

upon *Exodus*, it is not unlikely that the statement once existed in part of an earlier document no longer preserved in *Exodus*.¹ On the other hand, there is no suggestion in the early historical books that the Ark contained a code of laws. On the whole, it is perhaps most probable that originally the Ark held a sacred stone or stones, at first believed to be an actual embodiment of Jehovah, but afterwards, at a higher stage of religious development, to be inscribed with laws enjoined by Him. Unhewn stones were frequently in antiquity objects of religious reverence. The Phœnicians are said to have venerated stones which they believed to be animated (*ἑμψυχοὶ λίθοι*). A black stone was connected with the worship of Cybele and presented by Attalus of Pergamum to the Romans in 204 B.C.; and the Venus of Paphos was represented by a conical stone, shaped like one of the *metæ* which marked the extremities of a Roman racecourse (*Tac. Hist.*, ii. 2, 3). Moreover, amongst the Israelites at an early date a stone could be regarded as God's abode, as by Jacob at Bethel (*Gen.* xxviii. 22); pillars, even as late as Moses' time, were set up beside the altar of Jehovah (*Exod.* xxiv. 4), though forbidden afterwards; whilst the name *Ebenezer*, "Stone of Help," given to a stone by Samuel (see *I Sam.* vii. 12 mg.) is suggestive. Possibly the stone contained in the Ark was a meteorite:² if Jehovah was thought to manifest His power by atmospheric disturbances, an object which had fallen from the sky would be particularly likely to become associated with His Presence.

3. Religious Rites, Places, and Functionaries.

The presentation to Jehovah of animal sacrifices (*II vi.* 13, xxiv. 25) finds parallels in most early religions, and the fact does not need to be illustrated at length. The flesh of the victim was usually burnt, so that the savour and steam of it might reach the god to whom it was offered (see *Gen.* viii. 21).³ As the sites of such sacrifices the summits of hills were generally chosen. For instance, amongst the Israelites the top of Mount Olivet was a place where Jehovah was worshipped (*II xv.* 30, 32); and it was on the same spot that Solomon afterwards built a "high place" for Chemosh and Milcom, the gods worshipped by some of his foreign wives (*I Kings* xi. 7). Moabite "high places" are also mentioned in *Num.* xxii. 41, and in Mesha's inscription (p. 68); whilst of Canaanite and Edomite "high places" examples have been found at Gezer and near Petra. It will be remembered,

¹ Cp. Driver, *Deut.*, p. 118. The passages *Exod.* xxv. 16, xl. 20, representing that the "Testimony" was placed in the Ark, come from the Priestly Code, which is later in origin than *Deut.*

² Cp. the image of the Ephesian Artemis (*διοπερές*), *Acts* xix. 35.

³ Cp. the Babylonian story of the Deluge, "The gods smelt the goodly savour, the gods gathered like flies over the sacrifices;" and *Hom. Il.* i. 67 (of Apollo), ἀρνῶν κνίσσης . . ἀντιάσας.

also, that amongst the Latins the *feriæ Latinæ* in honour of Jupiter Latiaris were held on the Alban mount. Besides slaughtered cattle, cereal products were offered to Jehovah, such as the loaves of the *Shew* (or *Presence*) *Bread* (I xxi. 6). These have their analogy in the cakes presented to the Queen of heaven, Ishtar (*Jer.* vii. 18), and in the offerings at the *lectisternia* of the Romans. As cereal offerings were not so easily burnt as animal victims, they were usually eaten by the priests or by consecrated persons (as being the deity's representatives).

The Priesthood and its Functions.

The priesthood at this period does not appear to have been exclusively confined to members of a particular tribe or family (though Abiathar and Zadok seem both to have been descendants of Aaron). For certain of David's sons are described as priests (II viii. 18), though they belonged to the tribe of Judah; and Ira, who is also called a priest (xx. 26), was probably a Manassite. David himself discharged priestly functions, for he wore a priestly robe (the *ephod*), apparently offered sacrifice in person, and certainly blessed the people (vi. 14, 17, 18). The ascertainment of the Divine will was effected by the use of sacred lots, which were in some way connected with the priestly *ephod* (unless in this case an image is meant, see I xxiii. 6). These lots were known as *Urim* and *Thummim*; and if two alternatives were presented to Jehovah for His decision, His will in favour of one or other of these was believed to be declared according as *Urim* or *Thummim* was drawn. This reliance upon the result of drawing lots as an indication of the Divine pleasure was not peculiar to Israel; for it prevailed among both the Greeks (see *Hom. Il.*, vii. 178-180)¹ and the Latins (at Præneste, for instance, oracles were derived from *sortes* consisting of sticks of oak upon which ancient characters were engraved).

4. Barbarous Customs connected with Religion.

Alike by Israel and by other Semitic peoples certain barbarous usages were practised in connection with the worship of the deities they served. Among these was the custom of entirely exterminating the population of a hostile city which had been "devoted" to the national God. Thus Joshua "devoted" Jericho to Jehovah, and Mesha "devoted" an unnamed city to Ashtar-Chemosh (p. 69). The most notable instance supplied by II *Sam.* of a cruel act thought to be enjoined by Jehovah, is the execution of seven of Saul's descendants in expiation of a wrong done by Saul to the Gibeonites (xxi. 3-6). Individual responsibility was as yet imperfectly distinguished from collective

¹ ὡς δὲ τις εἵπασκεν ἰδὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν· Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ Αἰάντα λαχεῖν ἢ Τυδεὸς υἱὸν ἢ αὐτὸν βασιλῆα πολυχρύσοιο Μυκῆνης.

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responsibility, so that sons could be put to death together with, or even instead of, the father for the latter's offences without any feeling arising that justice was thereby violated (see *Josh.* vii. 24, and cp. David's curse on Joab, *II Sam.* iii. 29).

Superiority of Israel's Religious and Moral Standard.

It will be seen from this review of some of the religious usages described, or alluded to, in *II Sam.* and elsewhere, that there was much in Israel's religion at this period that was defective both spiritually and morally (as judged by the standard of a later age). The nation, like other peoples that worshipped a single national God, was not monotheistic but henotheistic; and into its conception of Jehovah many local and materialistic limitations entered. But there is evidence that in two features the Israelites, even at this early stage of their history, were really in advance of the peoples whom they had displaced or by whom they were surrounded. One of these was the absence among them of human sacrifices. It is probable that among their ancestors the practice of offering human sacrifices to Jehovah once really prevailed, for the mention of the projected sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, as being at first required and then prohibited by Jehovah, seems to reflect a consciousness that such sacrifices had once been the rule and were afterwards discontinued. It seems not improbable that the dedication of firstborn children to Jehovah (*Exod.* xxii. 29) was originally a substitution for the actual sacrifice of them. On the other hand, in historic times, a king of Moab at a crisis actually sacrificed his eldest son (*II Kings* iii. 27); the peoples deported into Palestine after the fall of the Northern Kingdom burnt their offspring to their respective gods (*II Kings* xvii. 31); the Carthaginians in periods of danger sacrificed children of their noblest families; and even the Romans buried alive human victims as late as the second Punic War (*Livy* xxii. 57). It is true, indeed, that the custom was also practised by some of the worst Hebrew kings; but this was in defiance of the teaching of the prophets (see *Mic.* vi. 7), and consequently was a departure from the real standard of the religion of Jehovah.¹ As might antecedently be expected, the whole people did not advance together in religion: there were always those who lagged behind the more enlightened members of the nation; and if such occupied high stations, their influence for evil was proportionately great. The second feature was the existence in Israel of a sentiment adverse to acts of gross sensuality. It may seem strange, in connection with a book that contains the narratives of David's adultery with Bathsheba and Amnon's outrage on Tamar, to claim for Israel a relatively high

¹ See Driver, *Gen.*, p. 221.

standard of sexual morality. Yet notwithstanding cases like those named, it seems reasonable to see in the phrase used by Tamar (II xiii. 12), *No such thing ought to be done in Israel*, testimony to a public opinion among the Israelites in regard to sexual offences which did not prevail amongst the neighbouring populations. And it is noteworthy that it is as the rebuker of David's adultery that the prophet Nathan figures prominently in the history. It was through the appearance amongst the Israelites of a succession of such prophets as he, men who denounced in the name of Jehovah impurity, dishonesty, idolatry and other sins, that the Hebrew people owed that advance in moral and spiritual ideas which is manifest in the later books of the Old Testament.

Note.—The Moabite Stone.

The Moabite Stone, found in 1868 near Dibon, bears an inscription in which Mesha, king of Moab about 850 B.C., and a contemporary of Ahab, king of Israel, commemorates his successes. It is of very great interest, for it illustrates not only the close kinship between the Moabite language and Hebrew, but also the similarity subsisting between the habits of thought of the Moabites and the Israelites in regard to their national deities. It is on this account that a rendering of it is appended here. The following translation is based on that given by W. H. Bennett in Hastings, *DB*, iii., p. 407. As the original is unpointed, it is uncertain what vowels should be supplied with the consonants in the case of various proper names that do not occur in the O.T.; so these are spelt with the equivalent consonants only. As the stone was broken by the Arabs soon after it was discovered, the inscription is imperfect. Words in italics are supplied to elucidate the sense.

"I am Mesha, son of Chemosh (-melech?), king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father was king over Moab thirty years, and I became king after my father. And I made this high-place of Chemosh¹ in KRKhH . . . because he saved² me from all (the kings?), and because he let me see *my desire* upon all that hated me.³ Omri, king of Israel, afflicted⁴ Moab many days because Chemosh was angry with⁵ his land. And his son succeeded him, and he also said, I will afflict Moab; in my days he spoke (thus?), but I saw *my desire* upon him and upon his house,⁶ and Israel perished⁷ for ever. Now Omri took

¹ Cp. I Kings xi. 6: "Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh."

² I Sam. vii. 8: "Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that *he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.*"

³ Ps. lix. 10: "God shall *let me see (my desire) upon my enemies.*"

⁴ Exod. i. 11: "They (the Egyptians) did set over them task-masters to afflict them."

⁵ II Kings xvii. 18: "Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel."

⁶ Ps. liv. 7: "Mine eye hath seen (my desire) upon mine enemies."

⁷ Num. xxi. 30: "Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon."

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in possession (all the land of) Medeba, and (Israel) dwelt therein¹ his days and half his son's days, forty years, and Chemosh (restored it?) in my days. And I built Baalmeon, and I made in it the AShWKH and I (built) Kiriathaim. And the men of Gad dwelt in the land of (Ataroth) from of old, and the king of Israel built for himself Ataroth. And I fought against the city and took it and slew all the². . . . of the city, a *desirable* sight for Chemosh and for Moab; and I removed from thence the altar-hearth³ (?) of DWDH and I dragged (?) it before Chemosh in Kerioth, and I made to dwell in it the men of ShRN and the men of MKhRTh. And Chemosh said to me, Take Nebo against Israel; and I went by night and fought against it from break of dawn till noon, and I took it and I slew all, seven thousand (men) and women and damsels,⁴ for I had devoted it⁵ to Ashtar-Chemosh. And I took thence of Yahweh and I before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built Jahaz and dwelt therein, while he fought against me. And Chemosh drove him out before me.⁶ And I took from Moab two hundred men, all its chiefs (?), and led them against Jahaz and took it to add it to Dibon. I built KRKhH, the walls of the forests, and the walls of the Ophel,⁷ and I built its gates, and I built its towers. And I built the house of the king and I made reservoirs (?) in the midst of the city in KRKhH, and I said to all the people, Make you every man a cistern in his house. And I hewed the MChRThTh for KRKhH by means of the prisoners (taken from) Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the high way by the Arnon. I built Bezer because men of Dibon fifty, for all Dibon were *obedient* servants,⁸ and I reigned a hundred in the cities which I added to the land. And I built Medeba (?) and Beth-diblathaim. And *as for* Beth-baal-meon, there I placed sheep of the land, and Horonaim, wherein dwelt Chemosh said to me, Go down,⁹ fight against Horonaim, and Chemosh in my days"

(b) COMPARISON WITH LATER STAGES OF THE HEBREW RELIGION.

1. Henotheism replaced by Monotheism.

The religion of Israel during the period embraced by II

¹ Josh. xxi. 43: "So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land . . . ; and they possessed it and dwelt therein."

² Judg. ix. 45: "And Abimelech fought against the city . . . and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein."

³ Ezek. xliii. 15: "And from the altar-hearth and upward . . ."

⁴ Judg. v. 30: "Have they not divided the spoil? a damsel, two damsels to every man."

⁵ Num. xxi. 2 mg.: "If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will devote their cities."

⁶ Josh. xxiv. 18: "And Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples."

⁷ Neh. iii. 27: "The Tekoites repaired another portion . . . unto the wall of Ophel."

⁸ The same word as that rendered in I Sam. xxii. 14, *council*, and in II Sam. xxiii. 23, *guard*.

⁹ I Sam. xxiii. 4: "And Jehovah answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah."

Samuel was, as has been seen, not monotheism but henotheism. The national victories obtained in David's reign and some of his successors must have encouraged the idea that Jehovah was superior to the gods of Israel's enemies, and so have contributed in some degree to the development of a monotheistic faith; but by itself it would never have produced such. A belief in Jehovah's supremacy founded solely upon the victories of Israel's armies could not have survived the shock of subsequent disasters. What really caused the early religion of Israel to issue in monotheism was the conviction, urged with increasing force by a succession of prophets, that Jehovah was a God of righteousness. Since He was a righteous Power, injustice and inhumanity were everywhere hateful to Him; and so it became possible to account for disasters befalling Israel and other peoples alike as being penalties inflicted upon them for grave moral offences. And by the eighth century the Hebrew prophets had come to hold, and to assert explicitly, that Jehovah exercised universal dominion. He controlled all nature; He had directed the movements and migrations of the Philistines and Syrians as well as of Israel; and He used first one and then another nation as His agents for chastising those who offended against His moral laws (see *Amos* iv. 13, v. 8-9, ix. 6, 7, *Isa.* x. 5-15, xxxvii. 26-29). The idolatry to which sections of their countrymen, in imitation of their neighbours, were addicted, they denounced in the strongest terms; and for the gods which the idols represented Isaiah used the expressive term *non-entities* (rendered by *idols* in *Isa.* ii. 8, etc.).

2. Disuse of the Ark as a Symbol of Jehovah's Presence.

The advance in the conception of Jehovah as the supreme and sole arbiter of human destinies was inevitably attended with a fuller realisation of His spiritual nature, so that a wooden coffer like the Ark must have increasingly appeared an inappropriate symbol of Him. The prophets, it is true, in their ideas, or at least in their manner of speaking, about Jehovah's Presence, did not discard local associations altogether; for they continued to regard Jerusalem as His earthly abode (*Isa.* viii. 18, xviii. 7, xxviii. 16). But in their writings there are scarcely any references to the Ark at all, a single mention of it occurring in *Jer.* iii. 16. This silence is significant; the only conclusion of which it admits is that, if the Ark was still preserved, it had lost for religious minds all its previous importance. When the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, it must have perished with it.

3. Subordination of Ritual to Moral Service.

With regard to the importance attached to sacrifice, the localities where it was legitimate to offer it, and the persons who

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were permitted to officiate, there was a difference in the prophetic teaching before and after *circa* 620 B.C., and still more decidedly before and after the Exile. The prophets of the eighth century were very emphatic in distinguishing between ritual and morality as having value for Jehovah; and they denounced the former when divorced from, or substituted for, the latter (see *Amos* iv. 4-5, v. 21-24, *Hos.* vi. 6, viii. 13, *Isa.* i. 11-14, *Mic.* vi. 6-8). The worship conducted at the local sanctuaries often evoked their indignation, but not (it would seem) because it was illegitimate as compared with worship at Jerusalem (as was the case afterwards), but because it was polluted with idolatry and immorality. Nor was there any insistence (as was also the case later) upon the requirement that the ministering priests should be drawn from a particular tribe or family. But after *circa* 620, in the reign of Josiah, the local sanctuaries, which had been the scene of many abominations, were abolished, and the worship of Jehovah was centralized at Jerusalem. It is tolerably certain, too, that the priesthood by this time was confined to the tribe of Levi. At a still later period, greater importance began to be attached to the details of sacrifice. By Ezekiel, who was one of the priests that were carried into captivity at Babylon, and who drew up a scheme for the conduct of the Temple worship against the time when the exiles should be restored and the Temple rebuilt, careful regulations were laid down respecting the offerings to be made to Jehovah; and the priesthood was restricted to the descendants of Zadok (who was himself a descendant of Aaron), all other Levites being excluded and relegated to a subordinate position. But though greater emphasis was placed upon religious organization and ritual after the Exile, the primitive method of ascertaining the Divine will through the priestly ephod and the *Urim* and *Thummim* had passed out of use, and the things themselves out of existence; and the fitting channel for the communication of revelations from God to man was recognized to be the human mind enlightened by the Divine Spirit. There still survived a tradition that the *Urim* and *Thummim* had once been used by the priests (*Ezra* ii. 63), but the precise manner of their use seems to have been forgotten; and in the priestly enactments contained in *Exod.* xxviii. 30, *Lev.* viii. 8, *Num.* xxvii. 21, they are represented as ornaments set in the breastplate of judgment worn by the high priest. It will be seen from this that the development of religion in Israel was not uniformly in one direction. After the seventh century, whilst there was amongst the thinkers of Israel spiritual progress in the ideas entertained about the Divine nature, there was also a general tendency towards limitations and exclusiveness in the conception of the worship approved by the Deity. The restriction both of the place of sacrifice to the Temple at Jeru-

saalem and of the priesthood to the descendants of a single family stand in marked contrast to the ideal enunciated in *John* iv. 23.

4. Development of Individual Responsibility.

In the course of time the earlier practice of punishing the children for the sins of their fathers came to be regarded as inequitable, and ceased to be observed (*II Kings* xiv. 6). In the age of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the feeling which had found expression in this change led to complaints of God's dealings with men: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The latter prophet, in consequence, asserted that thenceforward God would hold every man accountable for his own sins alone. This unqualified declaration, it is true, ignored certain facts inseparable from the realities of human life, and the constitution of human society; but it testified to the advance made since the age of David in the conception of justice, and of personal responsibility for individual offences.

Comparison of II Samuel and parts of the Pentateuch.

The reflection may occur that the religious conditions described or implied in *II Samuel* should also be compared with the Mosaic legislation contained in the Pentateuch, so that it may be viewed in relation to an (ostensibly) earlier stage of the Hebrew religion as well as to its later developments. But the remarkable differences, both in substance and in diction, discernible between various parts of the Pentateuch have led the majority of modern scholars to conclude that they cannot all belong to the same period, and that the five so-called books of Moses are really a composite work, consisting of several constituent documents of widely different origin. And when the laws included in the Pentateuch have been analyzed into separate groups, marked by clear-cut distinctions in respect, for instance, of the authorized place of sacrifice, the qualifications for the priesthood, the number and the ritual of the religious festivals, as well as of many other subjects, it is a comparison between these groups and the practices obtaining at successive historical periods (as disclosed by the historical books) that makes it possible to decide, with more or less probability, at what periods these groups of laws took their rise, or were codified. Consequently to use the collective legislation of the Pentateuch as a background against which to set the conditions of religion described in *II Samuel*, with a view to marking the changes, if any, that occurred during the two centuries or more separating the Mosaic age from the time of David would be misleading. On the other hand, *II Samuel*, so far as its evidence extends, helps to throw light upon the probable date of certain parts of the Pentateuchal legislation. As an example of its use in this respect, certain discrepant enactments may be brought into comparison with the usages represented

as prevailing in David's reign. The enactments chosen relate respectively to—(a) the locality where worship could be legitimately offered; (b) the persons who might legitimately serve as priests.

(a) In *Exod.* xx. 24, it is implied that an altar for worship may be erected *in every place where Jehovah records His name*; in *Deut.* xii. 5, it is directed that *as soon as Canaan is reached, a single sanctuary alone* is to be recognized; whilst in *Lev.* xvii. 1-9, it is required that *all sacrifice should be offered, even during the people's camp-life in the desert, at one spot only, the Tent of Meeting*. In *II Samuel*, long after the conquest of Canaan, and after the establishment of the Ark at Jerusalem, sacrifice is offered at other places than at the Tent wherein the Ark was kept (see *xv.* 32, *xxiv.* 18) without any indication that such practice was in violation of any pre-existing laws. This evidence, so far as it goes, points to the conclusion that of the three laws cited, the first (contained in *Exod.* xx. 24) alone is pre-Davidic and (presumably) Mosaic, and that the rest are of post-Davidic, and *a fortiori* post-Mosaic, origin.

(b) In *Exod.* xxiv. 5, Moses is recorded to have sent *young men of the children of Israel* to offer sacrifice at an altar which he had built; in *Deut.* x. 8, *xxi.* 5, *the tribe of Levi* is expressly declared to have been separated from the rest of the people to minister before Jehovah and to bless in His name; whilst in *Num.* xviii. 1-7, *vi.* 22-27, it is to *the sons of Aaron alone* that the priesthood and the prerogative of blessing the people are restricted. In *II Samuel* (as has been seen) David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah, offers sacrifice and blesses the people (*vi.* 13, 17, 18) without rebuke, and his sons are expressly called priests (*viii.* 18). This evidence, again, accords with the first of the passages cited from the Pentateuch and disagrees with the others, thereby implying that the first enactment alone was at this time in existence.

XVI.

Analysis and Contents of the Book.

The Second Book of *Samuel* contains some of the summaries to which reference has already been made; and by these it may conveniently be separated into three divisions. (I.) The first includes ch. i.-viii., and closes with the summary in *viii.* 15-18; (II.) the second contains ch. ix.-xx., and concludes with the summary in *xx.* 23-26; and (III.) the third consists of the rest of the book, ch. xxi.-xxiv., and is an appendix to the whole work.

The analysis of the book is as follows:—

I. Events in the national history during David's reign (i.-viii.)

- (1) David's reception of the news of Saul's death (i. 1-16).
- (2) His elegy over Saul and Jonathan (i. 17-27).

- (3) Is made king over Judah at Hebron (ii. 1-4).
- (4) His message to the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead (ii. 5-7).
- (5) Eshbaal¹ (Ishbosheth) made king over Israel by Abner, at Mahanaim (ii. 8-11).
- (6) War between the two kingdoms, and death of Asahel (ii. 12-iii. 1). List of David's sons (iii. 2-5).
- (7) Quarrel between Eshbaal and Abner, and the latter's overtures to David (iii. 6-21).
- (8) Murder of Abner by Joab (iii. 22-30).
- (9) David's grief for Abner's death (iii. 31-39).
- (10) Murder of Eshbaal (iv.).
- (11) David made king over all Israel (v. 1-3). Length of his reign (v. 4, 5).
- (12) Capture of Jerusalem (v. 6-10).
- (13) Trade with Tyre (v. 11, 12). Additional list of David's sons (v. 13-16).
- (14) War with the Philistines (v. 17-25).
- (15) Removal of the Ark from Baale Judah (Kiriath-jearim) to Jerusalem (vi.).
- (16) David's desire to build a temple for Jehovah (vii. 1-3).
- (17) Jehovah's answer through Nathan, and David's thanksgiving (vii. 4-29).
- (18) Foreign wars against—(a) the Philistines, (b) the Moabites, (c) Zobah, (d) Damascus, (e) Ammon, (f) Amalek, (g) Edom (viii. 1-14). List of David's officers of State (viii. 15-18).

II. Events in David's private and court life (ix.-xx.).

- (1) His kindness to Meribaal¹ (Mephibosheth) (ix.).
- (2) War with Ammon and its allies, the Syrians² (x.).
- (3) David's adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah (xi.).
- (4) Jehovah's rebuke of David through Nathan (xii. 1-15a).
- (5) The death of Bathsheba's child and the birth of Solomon (xii. 15b-25).
- (6) The capture of Rabbah, the Ammonite capital (xii. 26-31).
- (7) Amnon's violence to his half-sister Tamar (xiii. 1-22).
- (8) The murder of Amnon by Absalom, and the flight of the latter (xiii. 23-39).
- (9) The recall of Absalom, and notice of his beauty and his family (xiv. 1-27).
- (10) The reconciliation of David and his son (xiv. 28-33).
- (11) Absalom's intrigues and rebellion (xv. 1-12).

¹ See notes on ii. 8, ix. 6.

² This war is placed in Section II by the historian because it gave an opportunity for what is related next.

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- (12) David's evacuation of Jerusalem (xv. 13-30).
- (13) His commission to Hushai to feign allegiance to Absalom (xv. 31-37).
- (14) Ziba, servant of Meribaal¹ (Mephibosheth), slanders his master (xvi. 1-4).
- (15) Shimei, a Benjamite, curses David (xvi. 5-14).
- (16) The rival counsels of Ahithophel and Hushai (xvi. 15-xvii. 14).
- (17) How information was conveyed to David, and how Ahithophel killed himself (xvii. 15-23).
- (18) David's retirement across the Jordan, and the welcome he received on the other side (xvii. 24-29).
- (19) The battle between the forces of David and Absalom, and the death of Absalom (xviii. 1-18).
- (20) David's reception of the news of his son's death (xviii. 19-33).
- (21) Joab's reproof of David (xix. 1-8).
- (22) Negotiations for the king's return (xix. 9-15).
- (23) The pardon of Shimei (xix. 16-23).
- (24) The repudiation by Meribaal (Mephibosheth) of the charges of Ziba (xix. 24-30).
- (25) David's parting with Barzillai (xix. 31-39).
- (26) The quarrel between Israel and Judah about the king's return (xix. 40-43).
- (27) The rebellion of Sheba and David's seclusion of his concubines (xx. 1-3).
- (28) The murder of Amasa by Joab, and the pursuit and death of Sheba (xx. 4-22). Second list of David's officers of State (xx. 23-26).

III. **Appendix relating certain additional occurrences of David's reign, and containing poems ascribed to him (xxi.-xxiv.).**

- (1) Account of a famine, and of the execution of some of Saul's descendants (xxi. 1-14).
- (2) Exploits of certain of David's warriors (xxi. 15-22).
- (3) A psalm attributed to David (xxii.).
- (4) David's "Last Words" (xxiii. 1-7).
- (5) His Orders of knighthood, the "Three" and the "Thirty" (xxiii. 8-39).
- (6) His census of the people, and the pestilence which followed it (xxiv.).

The greater part of II *Sam.* constitutes, as has been already said, a tolerably harmonious whole. The First Book ends with the death of Saul, so that the Second Book begins with the reign of David, of which it relates almost the complete history, though David's old age and death are described not in it but in I *Kings* i., ii.—chapters which are really a continuation of the narrative

¹ See ix. 6.

contained in II *Sam.* ix.-xx. Of the two sources from which (as has been shown) the compiler has combined numerous extracts in I *Sam.*, the one with which the principal contents of II *Sam.* i.-xx. are most in keeping is *A*. There appears to be only a single instance, or at most three instances, of variant accounts of the same incident being included, viz., the conflicting narratives of Saul's death (of which the first in i. 1-5, 11-12 continuing the account in I xxxi., seems to come from *A*, whilst the second in i. 6-10, 13-16 is presumably derived from *B*), and perhaps the discrepancies about the death of Abner (iii. 30, contrasted with iii. 27) and the death of Absalom (xviii. 15, contrasted with xviii. 14). But ch. vii., which by its contents and diction seems to reproduce the religious tone of an age later than that reflected (for instance) in ch. vi., probably proceeds from another hand and age than the preceding context, and may also be assigned to *B*. The summaries of events and lists of names in v. 13-16, viii., xx. 23-26, together with certain chronological notes, such as that in v. 4-5, are (as has been pointed out) most likely the work partly of the original compiler, and partly of a later editor; whilst the appendix, xxi.-xxiv. has been added, though, of course, not composed, by a second and final editor. The varied contents of these last chapters obviously cannot all have formed part of either of the connected narratives embodied in the rest of I and II *Sam.* Chapters xxi. 1-14 and xxiv. 1 connect naturally with xxi. 14, and the concluding words of the latter are reproduced in xxiv. 25. They thus appear to have once constituted a continuous narrative; but if so, the source of it is obscure. The lists of knights and their achievements, in xxi. 15-22, xxii. 8-39, resemble the summaries of David's officials in viii. 15-18, xx. 23-26; and probably had the same ultimate origin as the latter, so far as this can be conjectured. The two poetical pieces are obviously inserted in consequence of some traditional association with David: whether they really are his work will be considered elsewhere.

The interval of time included in the Second Book is something short of 40 years, from the accession of David until his old age. The actual years, in relation to our era, within which the events narrated fall cannot (as has been said) be determined with precision. The exact chronology of the O.T. at this period of Hebrew history is extremely uncertain, for the Hebrew historians of the Monarchy had no fixed era from which to reckon, but merely noted the length of successive reigns, or the year, calculated with reference to a sovereign's accession, when certain occurrences took place. More is said elsewhere on this subject:¹ here it will suffice to repeat that the dates, loosely approximate, within which the events narrated in II *Sam.* happened are 1017-977 B.C.

¹ See pp. 49, 50.

COMMENTARY.

II Samuel, as has been already implied, falls naturally into three parts: (I.) a section (i.–vii.) narrating with some fulness the chief occurrences of national importance in the early part of David's reign, to which is added in ch. viii. a summary of his wars and of his principal officials; (II.) a second section (ix.–xx.) relating incidents in his domestic life and certain public consequences resulting from them, together with a second summary of his officials; (III.) an appendix of mixed contents.

The historical succession of events is not uniformly maintained throughout; and in section I. there appears to be more than one departure from the true sequence. Thus the division of the book into two principal sections relating to David's public and private life respectively has caused an event like the Ammonite war (x., xii. 26–31), which might have found a place in the first section, to be deferred till the second, owing to its connection with the death of Uriah. Within section I., likewise, there is a breach of historical continuity which is not so easily explained, for the Philistine war recorded in v. 17–25 must almost certainly have preceded in time the capture of Jerusalem (vv. 6–12). The incidents of the famine and the census narrated in xxi. and xxiv., since they occur in the Appendix, naturally do not occupy their proper chronological position among the events of David's reign.

CHAPTERS I.–VIII.

The subjects of these chapters are (*a*) David's reception of the tidings of Saul's death; (*b*) his accession as king of Judah; (*c*) Abner's elevation of Eshbaal (Ishbosheth) to be king over the rest of the tribes; (*d*) incidents in a war between the two kingdoms; (*e*) Abner's desertion of Eshbaal; (*f*) the death of Abner; (*g*) the death of Eshbaal; (*h*) the coronation of David as king of united Israel; (*i*) wars with the Jebusites and with the Philistines; (*j*) the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem, the captured city of the Jebusites; (*k*) David's desire to build a Temple for Jehovah, and Jehovah's promise of permanency to David's dynasty; (*l*) a closing summary of David's foreign wars and of his State officers.

Of these, i.–vi. are derived from the earlier source designated *A*; vii. comes from the later source denoted by *B*; whilst viii. has probably been supplied by the compiler (see pp. 17, 18).

CHAPTER I.

DAVID HEARS OF SAUL'S DEATH.

This ch. contains an account of David's reception of the tidings of Saul's death, concluding with an elegy which he composed over the fallen king and his son Jonathan.

vv. 1-16. *How the news was brought.*

- 1 **A**ND it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode
 2 two days in Ziklag; it came even to pass on the third day that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.
 3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of

1. *And.* The narrative is continuous with the close of the First Book, the division of the work into two volumes not being original, but made at a later date, probably to suit the customary size of the rolls upon which books were written (cp. Int. p. 10).

The slaughter of the Amalekites. As related in I. xxx., David had led his band of freebooters on an expedition to chastise the Amalekites for plundering, during his temporary absence, the city of Ziklag (given him by the Philistine king Achish: I. xxvii. 6). On the Amalekites see p. 38.

Ziklag. A town ascribed sometimes to Judah (*Josh.* xv. 31), sometimes to Simeon (*id.* xix. 5), but at this time in the possession of the Philistines. Its situation has not been ascertained with certainty, but it is generally identified with the ruined *Zuheilika*, ESE. from Gaza, a site which would make it about 80 miles from Mount Gilboa. The two days spent at Ziklag are reckoned from the death of Saul.

2. *Out of the camp from Saul.* The man was obviously one of Saul's soldiers, who had escaped from the slaughter: cp. the close parallel in I. v. 12. The LXX., for *from Saul*, has *from the people of Saul*, a variant due to different pointing.

His clothes rent. Rending the garments, like tearing the hair and beard (*Ezra* ix. 3), must have been originally an instinctive, uncontrollable act, giving relief to intense emotion; but it eventually came to be a conventional expression of sorrow or humiliation (cp. *Gen.* xxxvii. 29, *Joshua* vii. 6).

Earth upon his head. This token of mourning probably had its origin in the impulse leading the panicstricken to "hide himself in the dust" (*Isa.* ii. 10) before the wrath of the enemy; and it thus became a conventional sign of self-abasement.

Obeisance. I.e., an act of respect or submission, the word being an old form of *obedience*, from the French *obéissance*.

4 Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him,
How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And
he answered, The people are fled from the battle,
and many of the people also are fallen and dead;
5 and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And
David said unto the young man that told him, How
knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be
6 dead? And the young man that told him said,

4. *Many of the people.* There is probably no real inconsistency between this and I. xxxi. 6, where the expression *all his* (Saul's) *men* may refer to the king's bodyguard.

6-10. In these verses, with which 13-16 are connected, a second account (which may be denoted as *B*) is given of the death of Saul, differing in various particulars from the previous account contained in 1-5 and continued in 11, 12 and probably iv. 10 (which may be distinguished as *A*). Note (1) in *A* the informant is a Hebrew soldier (*v.* 2); in *B* he is an Amalekite (*vv.* 8, 13); (2) in *A* both *Saul* and *Jonathan* are reported as dead (*vv.* 4, 5, 12, though not in iv. 10), in *B* only *Saul*; (3) in *A* the informant does not explain how the king and his son met their deaths, in *B* he claims to have killed Saul at the latter's request; (4) in *A* (if iv. 10 is rightly assigned to it) David slays the man who reported Saul's death, as a reward for his tidings; in *B* David orders some of his guard to slay the Amalekite for killing *Jehovah's anointed*. Of these two accounts *A* is compatible with the narrative of Saul's death in I. xxxi. 1-7, it being intelligible that the soldier only knew that the king and his son had perished, without being acquainted with the king's suicide. But *B* does not agree with the narrative in I. xxxi. 1-7, for (a) it implies that no one was near Saul, until the Amalekite approached, whereas in I. xxxi. 1-7 Saul's armour-bearer is still in attendance upon him; (b) it represents that Saul was closely pursued by the *cavalry* of the enemy, whereas I. xxxi. 1-7 describes the king as distressed by the *archers*. By those who do not recognize the composite character of the narrative here (*vv.* 1-16), it has to be supposed that the Amalekite of *v.* 8, 13 is identical with the man out of the camp from Saul of *v.* 2, who, having found the body of Saul after he had killed himself (as described in I. xxxi. 4) fabricated the story related in *vv.* 6-10, in the hope of being rewarded for what he claimed to have done. But there is nothing to suggest that he lied (contrast I. Kg. xiii. 18); and the difference between the phraseology of *vv.* 1-5, 11-12, iv. 10, and that of *vv.* 6-10, 13-16, together with the fact that several duplicate and inconsistent narratives occur in the First Book (see Int. pp. 16, 17) makes it highly probable that two distinct traditions have been united here. Of the two *A* seems to be the earlier and more trustworthy. An Israelite soldier might well bring to David, as the king's probable successor, news of Saul's death; whereas it is unlikely that an Amalekite would know enough about David's prospects of succeeding Saul to convey to him the latter's crown, or, after the Amalekites' raid on Ziklag, could regard himself as acceptable to him. Moreover in *A* stress is laid upon the death of both Saul and his son, and it thus has a point of contact with David's elegy in *vv.* 19-27, a poem which has all the appearance of being a contemporary production.

¹ Or, *over*.
² Or, *giddiness*.

As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots
 7 and the horsemen followed hard after him. And
 when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called
 8 unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he said
 unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am
 9 an Amalekite. And he said unto me, Stand, I pray
 thee, ¹beside me, and slay me, for ²anguish hath
 taken hold of me; because my life is yet whole in
 10 me. So I stood beside him, and slew him, because
 I was sure that he could not live after that he was
 fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his
 head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and
 11 have brought them hither unto my lord. Then
 David took hold on his clothes, and rent them;
 and likewise all the men that were with him:
 12 and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even,

6. *Mount Gilboa*. This, the scene of the battle, is a range of limestone hills 1700 ft. high, on the W. of the Jordan, 20 miles SSW. of the lake of Chinnereth, and rising in an arc-shaped formation, E. of the plain of Esdraclon. The reason why an encounter between the Philistines and Israel occurred here was that the former desired to command the trade-route from Damascus to their own country and Egypt, which passed through the plain of Esdraclon, and was threatened by Saul, who was posted on Gilboa, above the plain.

Leaned on his spear. I.e. for support, see v. 9.

9. *Anguish*. The Hebrew term, which is only found here, is of uncertain meaning. The mg. translates it by *giddiness*, which receives some support from the LXX. σκοτος δεινόν, if this is a corruption of σκοτοδεινον, a rare synonym for σκοτοδινία, "vertigo" or "dizziness"; but it is perhaps better understood as *cramp*. Through this Saul was prevented from escaping by flight, and he did not wish to be taken alive by his pursuers.

10. *Fallen*. I.e. in consequence of the giddiness or cramp mentioned in v. 9.

The crown. That kings usually went into battle with the symbols of their rank appears from I. Kg. xxii. 30.

The bracelet. Better, *the armlet*: cp. Aq. κλάνιον (κλάνια being defined by Hesychius as ψέλλια βραχιόνων). The *armlet* here mentioned was, like the crown, part of the insignia of royalty: in II. Kg. xi. 12 a plausible emendation (by the addition of a single letter) of the difficult statement *they put the crown upon him* (Joash) *and the testimony is they put upon him the crown and the armlet*.

11-12. These verses continue vv. 1-5. The similarity of the diction to that of vv. 4, 5 is noticeable.

12. *Fasted*. Absence of the desire for food is a natural consequence of great grief (iii. 35, xii. 17), and abstinence would readily become a conventional practice on occasions of mourning (I. xxxi. 13). But religious

for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel ;
 13 because they were fallen by the sword. And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou ? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger,
 14 an Amalekite. And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to put forth thine hand
 15 to destroy the LORD's anointed ? And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and

fasts (*Judges* xx. 26, *Ezra* viii. 23) are probably of different origin. "There are very strong reasons for believing that in the strict Oriental form in which total abstinence from meat and drink is prescribed, (religious) fasting is primarily nothing more than a preparation for the sacramental eating of holy flesh" (W. R. Smith, *RS.*, p. 434).

The people of the LORD. Cp. vi. 21. But the LXX. has *the people of Judah* (the difference being that between ι and γ), which (in view of *the house of Israel* following) is preferable. The word *Lord* is an English rendering of the term *Κύριος* (Vulg. *Dominus*) which the LXX. ordinarily substitutes for the Hebrew JEHOVAH, on which see p. 61.

13-16. These verses continue the extract in *vv.* 6-10.

13. *The son of a stranger.* Better, *the son of a sojourner*, LXX. $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma \alpha\acute{\nu}\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\omicron}\iota\kappa\omicron\upsilon$. The Heb. term rendered *sojourner* described a person who, leaving his own country and coming to a land or district not his own, placed himself under the protection of the people or tribe that occupied it (cp. *Gen.* xxiii. 4), such protection being granted him as an obligation of honour, not of right (which could be claimed only by kin), and imposing upon him certain duties. A sojourner acknowledged the god of the country in which he took up his abode, religion being closely connected with nationality and national territory : cp. xiv. 16, I. xxvi. 19, *Ruth* i. 16. The Amalekite of the present passage was the son of a sojourner in Israel, who had separated himself from his countrymen, and had become, in a measure, a naturalized alien amongst the Hebrews.

14. *The LORD'S anointed.* Anointing is mentioned in connection not only with kings (I. x. i, xvi. 13, I. *Kings* xix. 15), but also with priests (*Lev.* viii. 12) and prophets (I. *Kings* xix. 16), though in the case of the last the expression may be only figurative. In primitive times animal fats alone were used (vegetable oils first becoming known when men became agriculturists), and the practice of anointing probably arose in an age when the distinction recognized between men and animals was less sharp than was afterwards the case, and when the superiority in strength or other qualities possessed by animals led people to ascribe to them superhuman attributes. It was believed that contact with the fat of such animals would impart to men their qualities ; and consequently important personages were anointed with it. In more enlightened ages, the act of anointing was regarded as an outward sign of the Divine choice and favour ; hence not only individuals in Israel, but even the nation as a whole could be entitled Jehovah's "anointed" (*Ps.* cv. 15, lxxxiv. 9, lxxxix. 38, 51, *Hab.* iii. 13).

16 fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head ; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

vv. 17-27. *David's Lamentation.*

17 **A**ND David lamented with this lamentation over
18 Saul and over Jonathan his son : and he bade them teach the children of Judah *the song of*

16. *Thy blood . . . head.* I.e. the responsibility for thy death rests with thyself. The phrase is metaphorical, probably having its origin in the circumstance that a homicide actually used to wipe his weapon upon the head of his victim, in the belief that he thereby avoided the pollution of murder. Thus in *Soph. El.* 445-6, it is said of Clytæmnestra that after slaying Agamemnon she ἐπὶ λουτροῖσιν κάρῃ κηλίδας ἐξέμαξεν (for ablution she wiped off the bloodstains upon his head) : cp. also *Hom. Od.* xix. 92, οὐ τι με λήθεις ἔρδουσα μεγάλα ἔργον ὃ σὴ κεφαλῇ ἀναμάξεις. The execution by David of the man who brought tidings of Saul's death was partly prompted by natural indignation against any one who thought to profit by having a hand in, or even reporting, the king's end, but was perhaps likewise dictated by a politic desire to clear himself from the suspicion of having any feelings but those of sympathy towards the fallen monarch.

17. *Lamented with this lamentation.* Better, *chanted this elegy*, cp. *Ezek.* xxxii. 16. The Heb. has the technical expression for a funeral dirge, which was usually marked by a peculiar rhythm, though this rhythm does not happen to be employed here.

18. The text of this *v.* is in considerable disorder. The Heb., translated literally, is, *And he said to teach the children of Judah the bow.* The R.V. regards *The Bow* as the title of the elegy (cp. the title *The Bush*, applied to *Ex.* iii. in *Luke* xx. 37, and *Elijah*, used of *I. Kings* xix. in *Rom.* xi. 2 mg.) For this view, however, the only support furnished by the poem itself is *the bow of Jonathan* in *v.* 22, where the phrase is parallel to *the sword of Saul*. The Vatican MS. of the LXX. does not contain the word for *bow* ; but the omission of it will not remove all the difficulties. For whilst it is tolerably clear that most vv. of the poem (except *v.* 27) are constructed in quatrains (the second line in most of them being parallel to the first, and the fourth to the third: cp. p. 213), the initial *v.* 18 is not a complete quatrain, as it might be expected to be. It is a natural conclusion, therefore, either that this *v.* is mutilated, or else that the missing parts of it are, by some accident, included in a corrupt form in *v.* 18. If the second alternative be assumed to be correct and the corruption to extend to the beginning of the next *v.*, it is comparatively easy, out of the words *the children of Judah the bow* in *v.* 18 and the words *thy glory, O Israel* in *v.* 19, to restore two lines in keeping with the sense of the remaining lines of *v.* 19.

In *v.* 18 for the first line of the poem two plausible emendations have been suggested. (1) With the word for *bow* retained but pointed differently, it is proposed to read *Learn* (literally, *understand*), *O Judah, hard things.*

the bow : behold, it is written in the book of ¹Jashar.
 19 ²Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places !
 How are the mighty fallen !

¹Or, *The Upright.*
²Or, *The gazelle.*

The only consonantal change involved is the insertion of ¹. (2) With the word for *bow* omitted (after LXX. B), it is proposed to read *Weep, O Judah*. This also involves a very slight change—² for ¹. If either of these solutions of the difficulty be accepted, the verb *he said* (R.V. *he bade* them) is best taken as introducing the poem, just as it does in xxii. 2 (= *Ps.* xviii. title) and in *Deut.* xxxiii. 2.

The rest of *v.* 18 seems to consist of alien elements, viz. (1) a direction (*to teach*) prefixed to the poem when it circulated independently, and implying that it was to be learnt by heart (cp. *Ps.* lx. (title) and *Deut.* xxxi. 22), (2) a note (*Behold, it is written in the book of Jashar*) explaining the source whence the poem was derived. Both of these would be more suitably inserted, in the reverse order, at the end of *v.* 17 thus: *Behold, it is written in the book of Jashar. To teach. 18 And he said, Learn, O Judah, hard things, etc.*

The Book of Jashar. This, the book from which David's elegy was transferred to the present work, is alluded to only here and in *Josh.* x. 13, and possibly also in *I. Kings* viii. 12 (53) as given in the LXX. Its title means "The Book of the Upright" (or, the Righteous), LXX. βιβλίον τοῦ εὐθούς, Vulg. *liber iustorum*; and by "the Upright" is probably meant Israel, the nation being designated in *Deut.* xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5 by the epithet *Jeshurun*, which comes from the same root and possesses the same significance as *Jashar*. At first sight it seems strange that a people whose religious and moral offences are a constant theme of the Biblical writers should have been thus styled. But the epithet reflects a popular estimate, based on national successes, when such were considered a proof of moral worth, just as calamities were held to be evidence of the reverse : cf. *Num.* xxiii. 10, 21, *Is.* xxiv. 16. The book of *Jashar* thus appears to have been a collection of poems celebrating the achievements of Israel or of individual Israelite heroes. Poems, songs, and ballads generally constitute the earliest channel for transmitting the memory of national events, their metrical form enabling them to be easily retained in the mind at a time when such aids for the preservation of records as the arts of reading and writing are not widely diffused.

19. *Thy glory, O Israel.* Literally, *The glory*, etc. If the received text be retained and rendered thus, Saul and Jonathan are here characterized as the chief pride of the nation. The word rendered *The glory* (or *beauty*) also signifies *The gazelle* (see mg.), and some, preferring this meaning, have taken it to relate to Jonathan as being fleet of foot like Asahel (ii. 18, *I. Chron.* xii. 8). But the poem obviously is a lamentation over father and son jointly, and in *v.* 23 their fleetness is compared with that of eagles. And if the first line of the elegy is rightly restored in one of the two ways mentioned above (p. 82), the second line ought to correspond with it, and such correspondence is secured if the words *The glory, O Israel*, are replaced by *Be grieved, O Israel*, the change only involving the insertion of a single letter.

Is slain upon thy high places. These words form the third line of the quatrain, and, without any change in the Heb., should be replaced by

- | | |
|----|---|
| 20 | Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. |
| 21 | Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither
fields of offerings : |

on thy high places are the slain. The high places meant are Israel's, the reference being to the elevated position of the battlefield (see on v. 6).

20. This v. contains the second quatrain.

Tell it not in Gath. The phrase is reproduced in *Mic. i. 10*. Gath, one of the most important towns of the Philistine pentapolis, was situated about 18 miles from the coast, on the edge of the Shephelah.

Publish it not. Literally, announce not the good tidings (LXX. μή εὐαγγελίσῃσθε).

Ashkelon. The city stood on some low cliffs bordering the Mediterranean, 18 miles W. of Gath. Some remains of the ancient harbour can still be traced. The house of the *Ashtaroth*, where Saul's armour was hung as a trophy, was at Ashkelon (I. xxxi. 10).

Daughters. It was the women of the triumphant foe who chiefly would celebrate the exploits of its warriors ; cf. I. xviii. 6, 7, *Ex. xv. 20, 21*.

The uncircumcised. Circumcision was practised alike by the Israelites and the allied peoples of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (*Jer. ix. 25, 26*), by the Arabians, and by the Egyptians, but not by the Philistines, who probably came from Crete, and possibly were not Semites (cp. p. 37). The non-observance of this rite thus distinguished them from the Hebrews : cp. I. xvii. 26, *Judges xiv. 3*. The practice, which prevails among various savage tribes in South America, Australia, and Polynesia, was seemingly a preliminary to marriage (cp. *Ex. iv. 24-26*), and was perhaps originally of the nature of a sacrifice offered to the deity as the bestower of offspring. But if so, this aspect of the rite eventually disappeared among the Hebrews, who came to regard it exclusively as the sign of a covenant between their race and Jehovah, and who performed it upon infants (cp. McNeile, *Exodus*, p. 29, 30). The transfer of the rite from adult age to infancy has its parallel in Christian Baptism.

21. This v. contains the third quatrain, but in the R.V. the first two lines are wrongly divided (see p. 87).

Ye mountains of Gilboa. This is the reading of the Vulg., which the sense requires ; the Heb. and the LXX. both have, by some accidental error, *Ye mountains on Gilboa*.

Let there be no dew. This should form the conclusion of the first line, in which a curse is invoked on the scene of the calamity. In the absence of rain, the dew was the principal agency for fertilizing the soil, the night mists covering everything with moisture.

Nor rain, etc. The rest of the v. constitutes the second line.

Fields of offerings. If the text is correct, this expression must mean fields fruitful enough to produce offerings, such as were presented to

	For there the shield of the mighty was ¹ vilely cast away,	¹ Or, <i>defiled</i> .
	The shield of Saul, ² not anointed with oil.	² Or, as of one <i>not</i> anointed.
22	From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,	
	The bow of Jonathan turned not back, And the sword of Saul returned not empty.	
23	Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,	
	And in their death they were not divided ; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions.	
24	Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,	

Jehovah at high places (of which Gilboa may have been one). The LXX., which has ἀγροὶ ἀπαρχῶν, takes the offerings to mean first-fruits: but the Heb. term signifies "heave-offerings," which makes little sense, since a heave-offering was a portion "heaved," or lifted, from a larger whole (like a thigh or leg from the carcase of an animal). LXX. Luc. and Th. have δρη θανάτου, and the O.L. *montes mortis*: if this be adopted, the second line will be, *Nor rain upon you, ye mountains of death*.

Vilely cast away. Strictly, *rejected with loathing* (Driver), i.e. cast away as a thing abhorred.

Not anointed with oil. This seems to refer to the shield, lying neglected and rusting on the hill-side. Shields, if of metal, were oiled, that weapons striking their surface might glance off; cp. *Is.* xxi. 5, Verg. *A.* vii. 626, *leves clipeos . . . tergent arvina pingui*. The R.V. mg. makes the word *anointed* refer to the consecrated person of Saul; but if this reference be preferred, it would be better to alter one letter (replacing א by נ) and read *the armour of the Anointed with oil*.

22. This *v.* is the fourth quatrain, the first two lines of which are, by the R.V., wrongly run into one (see p. 87).

The fat. The parallelism between the *fat* and the *blood* becomes more intelligible if it is remembered that the fat, like the blood, of various sacrifices might not be eaten, the reason probably being that both were regarded as seats of life. The *bow* and the *sword* are thought of as beasts of ravin; cp. xi. 25, *Deut.* xxxii. 42, *Is.* xxxiv. 6. For Jonathan's use of the bow cp. I. xviii. 4, xx. 36.

23. Of this, the fifth quatrain, the first line ends at *pleasant*, whilst the second line should be: *In their life and in their death they were not divided*.

Eagles. A like comparison occurs in *Hab.* i. 8. The birds meant included vultures, since they are described as bald (*Mic.* i. 16) and as eating dead carcases (*Job* xxxix. 27-30, *Matt.* xxiv. 28).

24. This is the sixth quatrain, the last line in the R.V. corresponding to the third and fourth of the original (p. 87).

Ye daughters. It was the women's part to wail for the fallen as it was also theirs to celebrate the victors (*v.* 20).

¹ Heb. *with delights*.

25 Who clothed you in scarlet ¹delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the
battle!

² Or, *O Jonathan, slain, &c.*

26 ²Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me :
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished !

Who clothed you. I.e., from the proceeds of the spoil taken after successful engagements; cp. *Judges* v. 30.

Delicately. The Hebrew word seems to mean not *delights* (mg.) in general, but *delicacies* or *dainties* (*Jer.* li. 34, cp. *Ps.* xxxvi. 8 *pleasures*) ; so it has been proposed to read instead, as more appropriate here, *with fine linen* (a change of one letter).

25. This, the seventh quatrain, seems defective, having lost the fourth line.

Jonathan . . . thy high places. If the text is sound, the apostrophe must be addressed to Israel, as in *v.* 19. But some Greek MSS. are cited as having *eis θάνατον ἐτραυματίσθη(ς)*, and possibly the true reading and rendering of this line are, *O Jonathan, thou art wounded unto death*.

26. This *v.* contains the eighth quatrain.

Pleasant. I.e., kindly and gracious, cp. *Cant.* i. 16.

27. The last *v.* of the elegy is not a quatrain but a couplet.

The weapons of war. The expression, though possibly to be understood literally (cp. *v.* 21), is more probably a metaphor for Saul and Jonathan, regarded as the sword and the bow of the nation (cp. *v.* 21). Similarly, in *II. Kings* ii. 12, Elijah is viewed as equivalent to the chariots and horsemen of Israel (cp. also *Isa.* x. 5, xiii. 5).

"In this poem there breathes throughout a spirit of generous admiration for Saul, and of deep and pure affection for Jonathan : the bravery of both heroes, the benefits conferred by Saul upon his people, and the personal gifts possessed by Jonathan, are commemorated in beautiful and pathetic language. It is remarkable that no *religious* thought of any kind appears in the poem : the feeling expressed in it is purely human."
—Driver.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

In view of the numerous divergences from the Massoretic text which have been suggested by various scholars and supported or mentioned in the preceding notes, it may be of service to give here a translation embodying the emendations noticed :

i.

18, 19. Learn, O Judah, hard things,
Be grieved, O Israel ;

On thy high places are the slain,
How are the mighty fallen !

ii.

20. Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

iii.

21. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew,
Nor rain upon you, ye mountains of death ;
For there was cast away the shield of the mighty,
The shield of Saul, the armour of the anointed with oil.

iv.

22. From the blood of the slain.
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

v.

23. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant ;
In their life and in their death they were not divided ;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

vi.

24. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet and fine linen ;
Who put ornaments of gold
Upon your apparel.

vii.

25. How are the mighty fallen
In the midst of the battle !
O Jonathan, thou art wounded unto death,
* * * * *

viii.

26. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,
Very pleasant hast thou been to me,
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

ix.

27. How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished !

CHAPTER II.

vv. 1-4a. *The anointing of David at Hebron as king of Judah.*

I **A**ND it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

1. *Inquired of the Lord.* An answer was presumably obtained through some device connected with the *ephod* (which at this time was with Abiathar, I. xxiii. 6). The term *ephod*, which was the usual designation of a garment of linen worn by priests or their attendants (see vi. 14, I. xxii. 18), seems also in some passages to describe a religious symbol, possibly an image, heavily plated with precious metal (see *Judges* viii. 26, 27), which usually occupied a fixed position (I. xxi. 9), but which was portable and could be carried from place to place (I. xxiii. 6, 9). The method of ascertaining JEHOVAH'S will by its means was probably effected through the *Urim* and *Thummim* (cp. I. xxviii. 6). These were perhaps precious stones kept in a pocket of the ephod, if by this a priestly vestment is meant, or in a cavity within the ephod, if an image is thereby denoted. On the assumption that the stones were two in number, enabling a decision to be reached between two alternatives (as the original text of I. xiv. 41, 42, represented by the LXX.¹ suggests) an affirmative or negative answer to inquiries might be obtained according as one or other was drawn from the receptacle containing them. This practice of seeking a decision from God through the drawing of lots, instead of through the human reason and judgment, indicates a rather elementary stage of religious ideas (cp. p. 66); but it persisted even into Christian times, for the Apostles on one occasion had recourse to it (*Acts* i. 26).

Go up. I.e., from Ziklag (which was probably in the Maritime plain) to the hill country of Judah.

Into any of the cities of Judah. David's hesitation before approaching his own tribesmen was probably due both to the fact that he had no indefeasible title to the throne except Samuel's private designation of him as Saul's successor, and also to the suspicions which his relations with the Philistine king Achish (I. xxvii.) would naturally occasion.

Hebron. Ancient Hebron lay on a hill to the NW. of the present *El Khalil* (G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 318). Owing to its central situation, the fruitfulness of the neighbouring valleys, and its accessibility from the desert (which enabled it to become a centre of trade with the Arabs), it was the chief city of Judah (*Judges* i. 10, 20, *Jos.* xv. 13). Its earlier name was Keriath-arba (*Gen.* xxiii. 2, *Jos.* xiv. 15), and it seems to have belonged to the Calibbites, a Kenizzite clan, which became incorporated in the tribe of Judah (*Josh.* xiv. 14). David had already acquired some influence with the population in the vicinity by distributing there part of the spoil taken from the Amalekites (I. xxx. 26-31).

¹ See Driver, *Notes*, p. 89.

- 2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife
 3 of Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of
 4 Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

vv. 4b-7. David thanks the citizens of Jabesh-gilead.

- 5 **A**ND they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.
 6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto

2. *And his two wives.* The presence of these was calculated to conciliate local feeling. Ahinoam came from the Jezreel mentioned in *Josh.* xv. 56 (not to be confounded with the Jezreel of *v.* 9 below), and Abigail's former home Carmel (to be distinguished from Mount Carmel) is named in *Joshua* xv. 55, both being Judean towns.

3. *His men.* *I.e.*, the armed band of outlaws which he had collected during his stay in the cave of Adullam (*I.* xxii. 2) and which had accompanied him to Ziklag (*I.* xxvii. 6, 8).

The cities of Hebron. *I.e.*, dependent villages, elsewhere called "daughters" of the town round which they were gathered (*Num.* xxi. 25, *mg.*, xxxii. 42, *mg.*).

4. *Anointed.* The previous anointing, related in *I.* xvi. 13, had been performed at a family gathering, and was merely an indication of Divine selection. This second occasion was a public consecration as king.

The men of Jabesh-gilead, etc. David's first public act after he was made king of his own tribe was an expression of gratitude to the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead for paying, at much risk to themselves, honour to the dead Saul (*I.* xxxi. 11-13). The message of thanks was not only a gracious deed in itself, but it was also both a diplomatic method of announcing his elevation to the sovereignty over Judah, and a courteous means of disarming opposition. Jabesh-gilead was opposite Beth-shan.

5. *Unto the men.* The LXX. has *unto the princes* (a variation due to the transposition of a letter).

This kindness. Or, *this act of piety.* The proper burial of the dead was regarded as of great religious importance by the Hebrews (*xxi.* 14, *Jer.* xxv. 33, *II. Kings* ix. 10), for it seems to have been thought that the disposal of the body after death affected, for good or ill, the soul in the nether world. Loss of burial, for instance, deprived the dead of the sacrifices which in primitive times were ordinarily offered to them.

6. *Truth, Better, faithfulness* (*cp.* xv. 20).

you : and I also will requite you this kindness, be-
7 cause ye have done this thing. Now therefore let
your hands be strong, and be ye valiant : for Saul
your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have
anoointed me king over them.

vv. 8-II. *Abner proclaims the son of Saul king over the
remaining tribes.*

¹ In I Chr.
viii. 33,
ix. 39,
Eshbaal.

8 **N**OW Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host,
had taken ¹Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and
9 brought him over to Mahanaim ; and he made him

Will requite you this kindness. The Hebrew has *I will do to you this goodness*, but *this* is probably an erroneous insertion ; the Vulg. has merely *et ego reddam gratiam, eo quod fecistis*, etc. The sense simply is "I will show you gratitude."

7. *Let your hands be strong.* A customary exhortation to courage (cp. *Zech.* viii. 9). David, by the words that follow, may have wished to suggest that he was prepared to stand their friend instead of Saul.

8. *Abner.* In I. xiv. 50, I. *Chron.* viii. 33 Abner is represented to have been uncle to Saul ; but by Josephus (*Ant.* vi. 4, 3) he is vaguely described as a relative (συγγενής).

Ish-bosheth. Probably included in the list of Saul's sons given in I. xiv. 49 under the name *Ishvi*. In I. *Chron.* viii. 33, ix. 39 he is called *Eshbaal*, and in this form his name appears here in one MS. of the LXX. (cod. 93) and in Aq., Sym. and Theod.¹ This appellation means "man of Baal," *Baal* being in strictness a title meaning "lord" or "owner," which was once applied to JEHOVAH, as well as to other gods, as appears from *Hos.* ii. 16 (see mg.), but afterwards discontinued in consequence of the confusion it was likely to cause between the character of JEHOVAH and that of the Canaanite deities (cp. p. 63). There is, therefore, little doubt that the real name of Saul's son here mentioned was *Eshbaal* or *Ishbaal* and that *Ish-bosheth*, which means "man of shame," and *Ishvi* are substitutes, to avoid uttering the name of a false god (in accordance with the direction of *Ex.* xxiii. 13). A parallel substitution has occurred in the name of Mephibosheth (see on iv. 4). From the same motive it is directed in *Num.* xxxii. 38 that the place-names *Nebo* and *Baal-meon*, which contain the appellations¹ of heathen deities, are to be changed. Probably, too, *their king* (xii. 30) is a substitute for *Milcom*.

Mahanaim. A city on the E. of Jordan and N. of the Jabbok, lying near the border between Gad and Manasseh (*Joshua* xiii. 26). It was probably not far from the Jordan, but its site cannot be fixed with certainty (G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 586). It was the traditional scene of Jacob's encounter with an angelic host (*Gen.* xxxii. 2). The choice of

¹ An O.L. MS. also has *Isbalem*,

9 king over Gilead and over the ¹Ashurites, and over
 Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and
 10 over all Israel. (Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years
 old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned
 two years.) But the house of Judah followed David.
 11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over
 the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

¹ The Vul-
 gate and
 Syriac have,
Geshurites.

it to be the capital of Eshbaal's (Ish-bosheth's) kingdom was due to its position E. of the Jordan, which made it difficult to attack from the W. in case David meditated hostilities (cp. p. 41).

9. *Gilead*. This extended from the plateau of Moab on the S. to the Yarmuk on the N., and was divided by the Jabbok. Its surface consists of ridges of hills, thickly wooded; and its forests afforded both a retreat for David when he fled from his rebellious son, and a shelter for the prophet Elijah (who was a native of the district, I. *Kings* xvii. 1 mg.), when he sought concealment from Ahab (I. *Kings* xvii. 3).

Ashurites. There were Ashurites who traced their descent to Abraham by Keturah (*Gen.* xxv. 3), but these were probably Arabian *bedouin* who lived in the southern deserts, and are not likely to be meant here. The name in this place is perhaps a mistake for *Asherites*, i.e., the tribe of Asher (as implied by the Targum). The R.V. mg. notes that the Vulg. and Syriac substitute *Geshurites*, described in *Josh.* xiii. 13 as occupying the borders of Mt. Hermon, and mentioned in iii. 3 below; but Geshur was an independent kingdom.¹

Jezreel. The name here denotes the plain of Esdraelon, as it does in I. xxix. 1 and in several other passages. This was roughly triangular in shape, with its longer sides bounded by the range of Carmel on the S. and the hills about Nazareth on the N., whilst from its base there was a descent to the Jordan. Across it there ran the highway from Damascus to Egypt.

10. The parenthetical statement in 10a probably comes from the compiler, for 10b follows upon v. 9. The figure 40 for Eshbaal's (Ish-bosheth's) age is scarcely likely to be correct, for it would make him one of the oldest of Saul's sons, whereas, in spite of the order of the names in I. xiv. 49, the three sons who fell with their father in battle (I. xxxi. 2) were probably older than he; and of these Jonathan must have been about equal in age to David, who was seemingly not 40 at this date (cp. v. 4). Nor does *two years* as the length of Eshbaal's reign agree with the length of David's reign as king of Judah (v. 5) unless it is assumed either that five and a half years were occupied by Abner in expelling the Philistines from Israelite soil W. of the Jordan, before Eshbaal (Ish-bosheth) could be said to reign over all Israel, or that nearly six years were spent by David after his rival's death before he could secure the sovereignty over the northern tribes.

11. This v. is also possibly due to the compiler.

¹ There were also Geshurites between Philistia and Egypt (I. xxvii. 8, *Josh.* xiii. 2).

vv. 12-17. *The fight at Gibeon.*

- 12 **A**ND Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of
 13 Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from
 Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of
 Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and
 met ¹them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down,
 the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on
 14 the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab,
 Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and play before
 15 us. And Joab said, Let them arise. Then they
 arose and went over by number; twelve for Benjamin,
 and for Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the
 16 servants of David. And they caught every one his
 fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his
 fellow's side; so they fell down together: where-

¹ Heb. *them*
together.

12. *Gibeon.* This, the modern *El Jib*, was situated near a pass which crossed the central range of hills W. of the Jordan, Gibeon and Geba (I. xiii. 16) being on the S., and Michmash on the N. of it. This pass virtually formed the frontier, after the Disruption, between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and it seems to have served the same purpose now. Gibeon, famous for the stratagem by which its Canaanite inhabitants deceived Joshua, was within the territory of Benjamin, and was 5 miles NW. of Jerusalem. Before the erection of the Temple it was the principal national sanctuary (I. *Kings* iii. 4).

13. *Joab.* Seemingly the second son of David's sister Zeruiah (I *Chron.* ii. 16). At this time he appears as David's chief lieutenant, and was afterwards commander of the national army. He was a man of great political sagacity and military genius, but of vindictive and unscrupulous disposition.

Went out. I.e., from Hebron, which the LXX. adds.

The pool of Gibeon. This is presumably identical with "the great waters that are in Gibeon," mentioned in *Jer.* xli. 12. A large subterranean reservoir and the remains of an open reservoir are said still to exist there.

14. *Play before us.* Possibly Abner had gone to Gibeon merely with the intention of demonstrating Eshbaal's (Ish-bosheth's) authority over Benjamin; and so to avoid actual hostilities with Joab's troops that had marched out to guard the frontier of Judah, he proposed a friendly tournament or fencing match between 12 men from either side, selected to display their skill in single combat.

15. *Went over.* I.e., passed in succession before some one who checked their numbers (cp. *Jer.* xxxiii. 13).

16. *And they caught, etc.* The mimic fighting became a scene of mutual slaughter on the part of the champions. The LXX. has a slightly longer text, which, rendered literally, is, *and they made fast each man with his hand upon his fellow's head, and his sword in his fellow's (i.e., his antagonist's) side.*

fore that place was called ¹Helkath-hazzurim, which
 17 is in Gibeon. And the battle was very sore that
 day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel,
 before the servants of David.

¹ That is,
*The field of
 the sharp
 knives.*

vv. 18-32. *The Death of Asahel.*

18 AND the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab,
 19 and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as
 light of foot ²as a wild roe. And Asahel
 pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not
 to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.
 20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Is it thou,
 21 Asahel? And he answered, It is I. And Abner
 said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or
 to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young
 men, and take thee his ³armour. But Asahel would
 22 not turn aside from following of him. And Abner
 said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following
 me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?
 how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy
 23 brother? Howbeit he refused to turn aside: where-
 fore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote

² Heb. as
*one of the
 roes that are
 in the field.*

³ Or, *spoil*.
 See Judges
 xiv. 19.

Helkath-hazzurim. The mg., interpreting the name as "The field of the sharp knives," implies that the buttons were off the foils. The LXX. has *the field of plotters* (a reading which turns upon the difference between γ and η): this suggests that there was foul play on the part of one side or both. Kittel (*Hist. Heb.* ii., p. 14), following Stade, thinks that the story of the sham fight which had so bloody a termination owes its origin to an attempt to explain the meaning of the name *Helkath-hazzurim*, but regards the battle as historical.

17. *And the battle, etc.* The tragic end of the proposed fencing precipitated a general engagement.

18. *Abishai . . . Asahel.* *According to the order of the names in I. Chron. ii. 16, the eldest and youngest sons of Zeruiah, David's sister.

Roe. Better, *gazelle*, an antelope proverbial for its fleetness (cp. I. Chron. xii. 8).

21. *His armour.* Literally, *that which is stripped* from a fallen foe (cp. the mg.). Abner warned Asahel that he was flying at too high game, and would do well to content himself with some lesser trophy.

22. *How then . . . thy brother?* Abner and Joab may have been former comrades in arms; but the death of Asahel at the hand of Abner would result in a blood-feud with Asahel's brother.

23. *With the hinder end of the spear.* LXX., ἐν τῷ ὀπίσσω τοῦ δόρατος, Vulg., *aversa hasta*. The butt-end of the spear had a spike (like the *σφυρῆρ* of a Homeric spear, *Il.* x. 152-3) for sticking in the ground (cp. I. xxvi. 7), and Abner, striking backwards as he ran, transfixed his pursuer.

- him in the belly, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood
 24 still. But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way
 25 of the wilderness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one band, and stood on the top of an
 26 hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from
 27 following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, ¹if thou hadst not spoken, surely then ²in the morning the people had gone away, nor followed
 28 every one his brother. So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.
 29 And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah; and they passed over Jordan, and

¹ See ver. 14.
² Heb. *from the morning*.

Stood still. I.e., in dismay at the sensational death of so distinguished a soldier (see xxiii. 24).

24. *And the sun went down.* More accurately, *and the sun had gone down.* The LXX., with a change of accent, connects this with the preceding, *But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner, and the sun was setting; and they came to,* etc.

Ammah . . . Giah. These localities have not been identified.

The wilderness. The term is often used of ground suited for the pasturage of flocks—"wild land."

27. *As God liveth.* The LXX. has the more usual *As the LORD liveth.*

If thou hadst not spoken, etc. The R.V. supposes Joab to refer to Abner's unfortunate proposal in v. 14; but the allusion may be to v. 26, and the following words may mean *surely only then, after the morning, would the people have withdrawn each man from pursuing after his brother*, i.e., Abner's remonstrance in v. 26 alone prevented the continuation of the pursuit all through the night.

28. *The trumpet.* Better, *the horn.* There were two kinds of trumpet in use among the Hebrews: one curved (made from a ram's horn), the other straight. It is the first kind that is meant here and in vi. 15, xv. 10, xviii. 16, xx. 1, 22.

Neither fought . . . more. I.e., on this occasion, though the war was continued (iii. 1).

29. *The Arabah.* I.e., the valley of the Jordan. The word connotes aridness (it is the *desert of Isa.* li. 3), and applied strictly to the depression (still called the *Wādy el Arabah*) S. of the Dead Sea, which is described

- went through all Bithron, and came to Mahanaim.
 30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.
 31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and
 32 threescore men died. And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and the day brake upon them at Hebron.

CHAPTER III.

vv. 1–5. *Civil War. The sons born to David at Hebron.*

This section probably proceeds from the compiler, being similar to v. 13-16; see Int., p. 18.

- 1 **N**OW there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house
 2 of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess: and his
 3 second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third Absalom the son of Maacah
 4 the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; and the

as "a desolate and arid valley . . . bounded on the E. by ranges of porphyry and granite . . . and on the W. by sterile cliffs of sandstone and limestone" (Driver, *Dt.*, p. 3). The name was subsequently extended to the Jordan valley N. of the Dead Sea (now called *El Ghôr*).

Bithron. The name, coming from a root meaning "to cleave," probably denotes the ravine leading from the Jordan valley to Mahanaim.

31. *And of Abner's men.* The conjunction *and*, with the closing word *died*, should be omitted (with LXX. *Luc.*) and the *v.* rendered: *And the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, Abner's men, three hundred and threescore men.* The disproportion between the casualties of the two sides is remarkable, but the figures of ancient, and even of modern, historians are not always to be implicitly trusted.

1. *There was long war.* The encounter at Gibeon naturally had its sequel in hostilities, of which neither the course nor the duration is described in detail.

2. *Unto David were born sons.* Of David's children here enumerated only Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah figure subsequently in the history, and all of these became conspicuous for misconduct (xiii., xv., I. *Kings* i.). Instead of *Chileab* (*v.* 3), the last three letters of which coincide with the first three of the next word, the LXX. has *Δαλουιά* (representing *Delaiah*, a name occurring in *Ezra* ii. 60 and elsewhere) and I. *Chron.* iii. 1 *Daniel*. The real form of the name is consequently uncertain. David's second son may have died young.

3. *Geshur.* A small Syrian state between Gilead and Mount Hermon, E. of the Sea of Chinnereth or Gennesaret (see xv. 8).

fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith ; and the fifth,
5 Shephatiah the son of Abital ; and the sixth, Ithream,
of Eglah David's wife. These were born to David
in Hebron.

vv. 6-II. *The quarrel between Eshbaal (Ish-bosheth) and Abner.*

6 **A**ND it came to pass, while there was war between
the house of Saul and the house of David, that
Abner ¹made himself strong in the house of
7 Saul. Now Saul had a concubine, whose name was
Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah : and *Ish-bosheth* said
to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my
8 father's concubine ? Then was Abner very wroth
for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's
head that belongeth to Judah ? This day do I shew

¹ Or, *shewed*
himself
strong for.

5. *Eglah, David's wife.* By Jewish tradition Eglah is identified with Michal, Saul's daughter, and David's first wife ; but more probably *David* is an accidental error for the name of Eglah's previous husband (cp. v. 3). H. P. Smith, however, suggests that the word *wife* is a scribal slip for *sister* (the words differing only in one letter) *i.e.*, half-sister, marriage between a brother and a half-sister (by the same father) being at this time permissible (see xiii. 13, Gen. xx. 12), though forbidden by the later law (*Deut.* xxvii. 22, *Lev.* xviii. 9, xx. 17).

6. *Made himself strong.* *I.e.*, obtained the ascendancy. The mastery which Abner achieved led him to cherish ambitious designs, such as the incident next narrated showed.

7. *Concubine.* Polygamy was a recognized institution among the early Hebrews (see *Gen.* xxix., I. *Sam.* i. 2) ; and royal personages had several wives. Some of these might be of equal rank ; but others, who were slave-women or captives taken in war, would naturally have a lower status, and Rizpah seems to have belonged to the latter class. Laws existed regulating the treatment to which women of this position had a right (see *Ex.* xxi. 8). An important difference between a wife and a concubine was that the former claimed for her children the larger share of the husband's property (*Gen.* xxi. 10). For Rizpah's sad experience see xxi. 8.

Wherefore, etc. Eshbaal (Ish-bosheth) was justly indignant at Abner's conduct, since it was tantamount to a claim to the kingdom, for a new king took possession of the harem as well as of the throne of his predecessor (cp. xii. 8, xvi. 21, I. *Kings* ii. 17-22).

Ish-bosheth. The name, accidentally omitted by the Heb., occurs in the LXX., which has *Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul.*

8. *A dog's head.* For the contempt which the term *dog* connoted among the Jews cp. I. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14, II. *Kings* viii. 13, *Mk.* vii. 27.

That belongeth to Judah. These words, which are omitted by the LXX., have been inserted by a copyist who took *the head of a dog* to mean " a headman of (the clan of) Caleb," *dog* and *Caleb* being in the unpunctuated Heb. text identical. The clan of Caleb was incorporated in Judah.

kindness unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, and yet thou chargest me this day with ¹a fault concerning this woman.

¹ Or, the fault of this woman.

- 9 God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as the LORD hath sworn to David, I do not even so to him ;
10 to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over
11 Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba. And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

vv. 12-16. *Abner's overtures to David.*

- 12 **A**ND Abner sent messengers to David ²on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land ? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel
13 unto thee. And he said, Well ; I will make a league

² Or, where he was.

This woman. Literally, *the woman* ; but the LXX. preferably has *a woman*. Abner's reply ignores the point of the king's complaint, and represents his relations with Rizpah as nothing more than ordinary licentiousness, which gratitude for his services should condone. The ingratitude (he implies) was all the greater since the charge was made at the very time (*this day*) when Abner was showing the utmost fidelity to the king's house.

9. *As the LORD hath sworn.* This seems to refer to Samuel's anointing of David (I. xvi. 1, 13), as no oracle of this purport is preserved.

10. *Dan . . . Beer-sheba.* The northern and southern limits of the Hebrew territory (see *Judges* xx. 1, I *Sam.* iii. 20). *Dan* is placed by G. A. Smith near Banias (the later Cæsarea Philippi), N. of the Waters of Merom, and at the entrance of the defile between Lebanon and Hermon. *Beer-sheba*, a mere cluster of wells, was 25 miles SW. of Hebron, in the territory of Simeon (*Jos.* xix. 2), on the edge of the South country (the *Negeb*). Both were sanctuaries. Dan in Greek times was associated with the worship of Pan : hence its present Arabic name (Banias = *παϊδας*).

12. *And Abner sent.* The haughty soldier treated the king's remonstrance (v. 7) as an unpardonable insult, and in revenge at once made overtures to David. Possibly he had already tampered with the loyalty of the tribes, and took advantage of Eshbaal's remonstrance to screen his meditated treason.

On his behalf. Better (if the text is sound) *where he* (David) *was*.

Saying . . . saying. This passage must be corrupt. The repetition of the word *saying* in itself suggests that there is some error, and the intervening question *whose is the land ?* does not correctly represent the Heb., which has only the unmeaning *whose is land ?* An ingenious conjectural emendation is, *And Abner sent messengers to David, saying, Under me is the land to give it to whom I please.* The Heb. of the last four words could easily be corrupted into the present text.

13. David seems to have had no scruples in taking advantage of Abner's treachery, and proceeded to treat with him as being the real master of the

¹ In I Sam.
xxv. 44,
Palti.

with thee : but one thing I require of thee, that is, thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face. And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from ¹Paltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return : and he returned.

vv. 17-30. *The murder of Abner.*

17 **A**ND Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, In times past ye sought for
18 David to be king over you : now then do it : for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of
19 the hand of all their enemies. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin : and Abner went also

situation. His demand for the restoration of Michal before granting Abner an interview was to enable him to claim the throne on the ground of his being Saul's son-in-law. The recall of Michal after her union with Paltiel was a violation of the direction in *Deut.* xxiv. 4 ; but the Deuteronomic code was of later origin than David's time.

14. *Whom I betrothed*, etc. See I. xviii. 25-27, where it is narrated that David brought to Saul double the stipulated number.

15. *Paltiel*. Abbreviated in I. xxv. 44 to *Palti* (cp. *Nathaniel* and *Nathan*).

16. *Bahurim*. A village in the territory of Benjamin on the road from Jerusalem to the fords of the Jordan. Jewish tradition identifies it with Almon (*Joshua* xxi. 18), the mod. *Almêt*, 4 miles NE. of Jerusalem.

17. *The elders of Israel*. The expression, which recalls the *γερονσία* of Sparta and the *Senatus* of Rome, seems here to denote a kind of national assembly, consisting of the leading heads of families. The heads of houses in various localities would naturally exercise authority and dispense justice in their respective neighbourhoods (*Jud.* viii. 14, *Ruth* iv. 2, I. Sam. xvi. 4) ; and collectively would represent the people at large whenever it was necessary for the sentiments of the nation to find expression.

In times past, etc. There is no record of this, though there may well have been a movement even among the Northern tribes after the death of Saul and his three eldest sons, to raise David, as a distinguished warrior, to the throne of the united people.

19. *Benjamin*. Special pains were taken to win over this tribe as most likely to stand by the house of Saul.

And Abner went, etc. The purpose of the journey to Hebron was both to escort Michal (v. 13) and to negotiate the conditions for the transfer of the kingdom (see v. 21).

to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And David sent Abner away : and he went in peace. And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from ¹a foray, and brought in a great spoil with them : but Abner was not with David in Hebron ; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all the host that was with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then Joab came to the king and said, What hast thou done ? behold, Abner came unto thee ; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone ? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the ²well of Sirah : but David knew it not. And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him

¹ Heb. *the troop*.

² Or, *cistern*.

21. *That they may make a covenant.* The Hebrew monarchy was not a pure autocracy: the respective rights of the sovereign and the people were embodied in a kind of charter (cp. I. Kings xii. 3 f.).

24. *What hast thou done ?* Behind Joab's protest to David on public grounds (v. 25) there was probably a feeling of resentment that David, who was a kinsman of Asahel's, and therefore by custom bound to avenge his death (cp. xiv. 7), had failed to do so. Possibly David was seeking to substitute for the customary blood-feud the authority of the crown (cp. xiv. 4-8), and had given Abner a pledge that his life was secure.

Quite gone. The LXX. has *gone in peace*, as in vv. 22, 23.

25. *Came to deceive thee.* There is no reason to suppose that Joab had real cause to suspect Abner of insincerity. The charge served as a colourable pretext for urging Abner's recall; and his taking steps, without the king's knowledge, to bring him back, shows his consciousness of power.

26. *The well of Sirah.* Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 1, §5) states that this was twenty furlongs (2½ miles) distant from Hebron.

27. *Into the midst of the gate.* The LXX. implies the reading *to the side of the gate*, a more likely place for a private conversation.

there in the belly, that he died, for the blood of
28 Asahel his brother. And afterward when David
heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless
before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner
29 the son of Ner; let it fall upon the head of Joab,
and upon all his father's house; and let there not
fall from the house of Joab one that hath an issue,
or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that
30 falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab
and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had
killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

vv. 31-39. *David's grief for Abner.*

31 **A**ND David said to Joab, and to all the people
that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird
you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner.

For the blood of Asahel. Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 1, §5) represents Joab's real motive as jealousy lest David should promote Abner over his head to the chief post of dignity.

28. *I and my kingdom.* David was doubtless moved to make a public disavowal of Joab's crime, not only by a genuine detestation of the deed (for Asahel had been killed fairly in battle), but also by the consideration that Abner's murder would prejudice the negotiations with the tribes under his influence. But the curse in v. 29, though reflecting David's private sentiments, could scarcely have been uttered publicly without alienating the support of one who was his chief lieutenant, and destroying his authority with the troops.

29. *All his father's house.* The defective sense of individuality prevailing at this time led to the inclusion of a man's family in the punishment due to his own misdeeds, without any feeling arising that justice was thereby outraged (see xxi. 1-14, *Joshua* vii. 24, 25).

That leaneth on a staff. Literally, *that holdeth a staff* (or *crutch*) i.e., a cripple. The LXX. gives the same sense (*κρατῶν σκυταλῆς*), but Aq., Sym., the Syr., and the Vulg. render the word translated *staff* by *spindle* (*ἀρπакτος, fusus*), which conveys the wish that the men of Joab's house should be no better than women.

30. *And Abishai.* Joab's brother is not previously said to have had anything to do with Abner's murder. The verse may embody a variant account of the occurrence. The LXX., instead of *slew*, has *lay in wait for*.

31. *Gird you with sackcloth.* Cp. *Joel* i. 8, *Jonah* iii. 5, *Dan.* ix. 3. The material meant was made of goat's hair, dark in colour (*Rev.* vi. 12). The wearing, on occasions of mourning, of a garb different from the ordinary, had its origin in a belief that contact with the dead conveyed "uncleanness" (just as contact with anything sacred conveyed holiness), and so rendered the clothes of the mourners unfit for general use. Accordingly, it was deemed expedient to put on special raiment which could be reserved exclusively for such occasions.

Mourn before Abner. The king put Joab to the public humiliation of taking part in the mourning for the man whom he had slain.

- 32 And king David followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron : and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner ; and all the people
- 33 wept. And the king lamented for Abner, and said, Should Abner die as a fool dieth ?
- 34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters ;
As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.
- 35 And all the people wept again over him. And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day ; but David sware, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else,
- 36 till the sun be down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them : as whatsoever
- 37 the king did pleased all the people. So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it
- 38 was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in

33. *Lamented.* *I.e.*, chanted a formal dirge (cp. i. 17). The portion of the dirge recorded is a quatrain, the parallelism being so arranged that the fourth line corresponds with the first, and the third with the second (cp. *Matt.* vii. 6). This would be clearer if the quatrain in the R.V. were printed thus :—

“ Should Abner die as a fool dieth ?
Thy hands were not bound,
Nor thy feet put into fetters ;

As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.”

As a fool dieth. *I.e.*, was it to be expected that Abner should die a death appropriate only to immoral or impious offenders ? The word rendered *fool* really means one deficient not in sense, but in conscience, one who is insensible to the claims of religion and morality, and recognizes his duties neither to God nor to man (see Driver, *Par. Ps.*, p. 457).

34. *Thy hands were not bound.* *I.e.*, he did not die as a criminal, pinioned and fettered for well-merited execution,

As a man falleth, etc. *I.e.*, he died an unsuspecting victim of an assassin's weapon. The phrase *children of iniquity* is a Hebrew idiom for “iniquitous men”: cp. *children of rebellion* for “rebels” (*Num.* xvii. 10), *sons of tumult* for “tumultuous ones” (*Num.* xxiv. 17), *children of obedience* (*I. Pet.* i. 14), etc.

36. *As whatsoever,* etc. Better (after the LXX. and Vulg.) *All that the king did pleased all the people.*

37. *All Israel.* David's tact in disowning all complicity enabled him to turn an incident threatening estrangement into an opportunity for increasing his popularity.

38. *A prince.* Better, *a chieftain*, the term in early writings being generally applied to persons who were chiefs or heads in various departments. Here it probably has reference to military leadership. Instead of *a prince and a great man* the LXX. has *a great prince* (or *chieftain*).

- 39 Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD reward the wicked doer according to his wickedness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSASSINATION OF ESHBAAL (ISH-BOSHETH).

- ¹ **A**ND when *Ish-bosheth*, Saul's son, heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were
2 troubled. And *Ish-bosheth*, Saul's son, had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also is reckoned to
3 Benjamin: and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have been sojourners there until this day.)
4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was ¹Mephibosheth.

¹ In I. Chr. viii. 34, ix. 40, *Merib-baal*.

39. *Weak*. The Hebrew term seems to mean primarily the weakness of youth (see I. Chron. xxii. 5, Prov. iv. 3 (= *tender*)), and secondarily weakness of character. According to v. 4, David was thirty at his accession.

The LORD reward, etc. David, all his life long, resented Joab's domination and methods, though he was too indispensable to him to be dismissed. He eventually revenged himself by striking at him from the grave (I. Kings ii. 5, 34).

1. *Ish-bosheth*. The name, wanting in the Hebrew, both here and in v. 2, occurs in the LXX. and Vulg. (cp. iii. 7).

His hands became feeble. His power collapsed after losing its chief support.

2. *Captains of bands*. I.e., leaders of forays; cp. iii. 22: Vulg. *principes latronum*.

Beeroth. The modern *El Bireh*, eight or nine miles N. of Jerusalem. The parenthesis in vv. 2b, 3, is meant to explain how it came to be counted a Benjaminite possession, for it was originally a member of the Hivite confederacy (of which Gibeon was the leading city) which misled Joshua as to the remoteness of the places that composed it (*Josh*. ix. 17). If the cause of the flight of the population was a panic consequent upon Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites (xxi. 2), the action of Baanah and Rechab may have been prompted by revenge.

3. *Gittaim*. The situation is unknown, though it was presumably near Ramah, with which it is mentioned in *Neh*. xi. 32. For *sojourners* see i. 13 note.

4. *Mephibosheth*. LXX. *Luc*. has Μεμφιβάαλ; and he is called in

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, as he took his rest at noon. ¹And ²they came thither into the midst of the house as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him in the belly: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. Now when they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bed-chamber, they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night. And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, which

¹ The Sept. has, *And, behold, the woman that kept the door of the house was winnowing wheat, and she slumbered and slept; and the brethren Rechab and Baanah, went privily into the house.*

² Or, *there came . . . men fetching wheat.*

I. *Chron.* viii. 34 *Merib-baal*, and in I. *Chron.* ix. 40 (end) *Meribaal*. One or other of these last, meaning respectively "Baal strives" and (perhaps) "hero of Baal," was doubtless his real name. *Mephibosheth*, introducing a word meaning "shame," is a later intentional substitution (see p. 90).

5. *His rest*. I.e., the siesta in which people living in the latitude of the Mediterranean generally indulge (cp. xi. 2).

6. This *v.* is corrupt in the Hebrew. There is nothing to which *thither* can refer; the words *as though they would have fetched wheat* are an incorrect rendering of the Hebrew text, which means simply *fetching* (or *taking*) *wheat*, and makes no sense; and *they smote him* anticipates *v.* 7. The LXX. has a different text, which is not only intelligible in itself, but accounts for some of the errors of the Hebrew. It yields the rendering (cp. mg.), *And behold the portress of the house was cleaning* (or *sifting*) *wheat, and she nodded and slept; and the brethren, Rechab and Baanah, slipped in and entered the house, and Mephibosheth was lying on his bed in his bedchamber*. The rest follows as in *v.* 7. The murderers took advantage of the woman's slumber to creep into the house and execute their design. The Hebrew words for *behold* and *thither* only differ in the vowel points, and the participle rendered *cleaning* could easily be corrupted into one meaning *taking*. The household of Mephibosheth seems to have consisted of a single maidservant whose duties included that of keeping the door.

9. *And David answered*, etc. David's generous indignation was, as usual, aroused at once.

10. *I took hold of him*. See note on i. 6-10. The conclusion of the *v.*

11 was the reward I gave him for his tidings. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now require his blood of your hand, and take you
12 away from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

CHAPTER V.

vv. 1-5. *David anointed king over all Israel.*

1 **T**HEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times
2 past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and

(which was the reward, etc.) should be rendered to whom I ought to have given a reward for good tidings! cp. LXX. ὃ ἔδει με δοῦναι εὐαγγέλια). The words were meant ironically. The sense in which the LXX. here uses the term εὐαγγέλιον is the primary meaning, and occurs in Homer (*Od.* xiv. 166, οὐτ' ἄρ' ἐγὼν εὐαγγέλιον τόδε τισω). Later, the word was employed (in the plural) to denote thankofferings made for good tidings (*Ar. Eq.* 654, εὐαγγέλια θύειν); and in the N.T. it acquired the meaning of "the good news," of the approaching Kingdom of God (*Mark* i. 14).

11. *From the earth.* Better, *from the land*, which might otherwise suffer through drought or some other calamity, in consequence of the curse of God (cp. *xxi.* 1).

12. *Hanged them up.* Their limbs, as the guilty instruments of their crime, were exposed in a place of public resort as a warning to others who might contemplate a similar assassination.

The grave . . . Hebron. The last words in *Hebron* are absent from the LXX.

1. *All the tribes of Israel.* I.e., the northern tribes. As *v.* 3 indicates, the gathering was not a public assembly, but a deputation of *elders* (see on *iii.* 17) sent to offer David the vacant throne. In *I. Chron.* xii. 23 f. it is represented that no less than 340,822 warriors attended at Hebron, a figure for which there can have been no trustworthy data and which is quite incredible.

Thy bone . . . thy flesh. Metaphors for kinship (*Gen.* xxix. 14, *Judges* ix. 2, and see *Gen.* ii. 23).

2. *Feed my people.* Literally, *shepherd my people*, LXX. σύ ποιμανεῖς λαόν μου. The conception of a ruler as the shepherd of his people occurs in Homer (*ποιμένα λαών*, *Il.* i. 263, etc.) and other Greek poets,

3 thou shalt be 'prince over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over
4 Israel. David was thirty years old when he began
5 to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

¹ Or, leader.

vv. 6-12. *Jerusalem the metropolis of the kingdom.*

It is impossible to say positively to which period of David's reign the capture of Jerusalem is to be assigned, though it is almost certainly subsequent to the wars with the Philistines described in v. 17. His elevation to the sovereignty of collective Israel would inevitably encourage him to free as soon as possible his kingdom from any submission to Philistine lordship; whilst the Philistines were not likely to acquiesce in the increase of David's power without an attempt to prevent it. Consequently the struggle between them must have preceded any campaign against a different enemy. Nevertheless, the attack upon Jerusalem probably took place quite early in David's rule over united Israel.¹ Three reasons would lead him to undertake it: (a) He would naturally wish to signalize his accession to the throne by some remarkable military success, appealing to the imagination of his subjects; (b) The conquest of Jerusalem was essential to the consolidation of his kingdom, for so long as the city was in the possession of the native inhabitants, it cut off Judah from the northern tribes; (c) The occupation of it

and is very common in Hebrew writers (*Jer.* ii. 8 mg., iii. 15, x. 21, xxiii. 1, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 2, 23, *Isa.* lvi. 11). The expression and its parallels are also very frequently used of God (*Ps.* lxxx. 2, xc. 7, c. 3) and of our Lord (*Joh* x. 11, *Heb.* xiii. 20, *I. Pet.* ii. 25). Judea was prevalingly a pastoral country, and it is natural that the shepherd's occupation should be a favourite source of metaphor. The terms ποιμήν and ποιμαίνω were at a later period used of the officers of the Christian church (*Eph.* iv. 11, *John* xxi. 16).

3. *Made a covenant.* Cp. iii. 21. The northern tribes seem always to have insisted on having an understanding with rulers of the house of Judah (cp. *I. Kings* xii.). The covenant was ratified by a second official anointing of David as king.

4-5. This chronological note probably comes from the compiler. The figure *forty years* occurs so frequently in the O.T. in specifications of periods of time (*Ex.* xvi. 35, *Judges* iii. 11, v. 31, viii. 28, *I. Sam.* iv. 18 etc.) as to appear to be conventional; but in this instance it is probably not far from the truth.

¹ Cheyne (*Enc. Bib.* i., 1026) thinks that the conquest of Jerusalem (Zion) belongs to the period of David's tribal kingship.

would furnish him with a capital for his enlarged dominion, more central and less exclusively Judean than Hebron. As a city on the confines of Judah (and so maintaining the king's connexion with his own tribe), yet without Judean associations, and possessed of fine defensive possibilities, the Jebusite fortress was admirably suited for the purpose to which its conqueror adapted it.

¹ See I Chr.

xi. 4-9.

² Or, *Thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame shall turn thee away.*

6¹ **A**ND the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land : which spake unto David, saying, ²Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither : thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of 7 Zion ; the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites,

6. *Jerusalem.* In *Judges* xix. 11 and in *I. Chron.* xi. 4, 5 the city is called Jebus, but that is perhaps merely an inference from the name of the tribe—the Jebusites—who occupied it. In the Tel-el-Amarna¹ tablets, dating from about the 14th century B.C., the name appears as *Urusalim* : on the meaning of this appellation and on the position of the city see p. 108 f

The Jebusites. The racial connections of this people are not known for certain, but the names of *Adoni-zedek* "king of Jerusalem" (*Joshua* x. 1) and of *Melchizedek* "king of Salem" (*Gen.* xiv. 18) are Semitic. Josephus styles them Canaanites (*Ant.* vii. 3, §2).

The inhabitants of the land. Jerusalem, together with a number of other cities in its vicinity, Gezer, Shaalbim, Ajalon (*Judges* i. 29, 35) and the Gibeonite cities, Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim (*Joshua* ix. 17), formed a group of independent city-states within the territory of the Hebrews long after the Conquest, and constituted a barrier between Judah and the rest of the nation. Jerusalem, indeed, is represented as having been captured by Judah (*Judges* i. 8), but the capture must either have been very incomplete, not including the citadel (cp. *Judges* i. 21, *Josh.* xv. 63), or else the place must have been re-taken.

Except thou take away, etc. Better, as in the mg., *Thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame shall turn thee away.* The inhabitants of the fortress deemed its situation so impregnable that it could successfully be defended by a garrison of the sightless and crippled.

7. *The stronghold of Zion.* The position of this has been disputed, since modern Jerusalem is situated on two hills ; but its most likely site is the S. end of the E. hill. Since the Jebusite Araunah seems to have retained his possessions (xxiv. 18), it may be inferred that the inhabitants of the place were not indiscriminately massacred.

The city of David. G. A. Smith suggests as an equivalent *David's-burgh*. For the practice of naming cities after their captors see xii. 28.

8. *Whosoever smiteth, etc.* The Hebrew in this passage is defective, and its exact meaning uncertain. The verb (*smiteth*) supplied by the

¹ A place in Egypt, 170 miles S. of Cairo. The tablets are inscribed with letters (written in cuneiform) from Egyptian vassals in Canaan to their Egyptian sovereign.

let him get up to the watercourse, ¹and smite the lame and the blind, ²that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, ³There are the blind and the lame; 9 he cannot come into the house. And David dwelt in the strong hold, and called it the city of David. 10 And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD the God of hosts, was with him.

¹ Or, and as for the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul—

² Another reading is, that hate David's soul.

³ Or, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

R.V. occurs in the parallel I. Chron. xi. 6; but the insertion of it does not remove all difficulty, since the word rendered *get up to* ordinarily means no more than *touch*. For the latter perhaps *get up by* should be read.

The watercourse. The Hebrew word recurs in the O.T. only in Ps. xlii. 7, where it signifies *waterspout* or *cataract*, but in later Hebrew it has the sense of canal or trough (H. P. Smith). If the meaning *water-course* be accepted, it probably describes the ancient shaft which has been discovered leading from the heart of the fortress down to the Gihon spring, on the E. of the hill: up this a storming party may have scrambled (C. F. Burney). In I. Chron. xi. 6 Joab is said to have secured the chief captaincy by being the first to effect an entrance into the citadel, but he was commander of David's forces before this (ii. 13 f.).

That are hated of David's soul. This is the rendering of the Hebrew mg.: the Hebrew text has *that hate David's soul*.

There are the blind, etc. Better, *The blind and the lame may not enter the house* (i.e., the Temple, LXX. *οἰκὸν Κυρίου*). The sentence seems to be a marginal comment of later origin, which has become inserted in the text. The words *The lame and the blind* in David's command recalled to a reader the exclusion (in Lev. xxi. 18 f) of *the blind and the lame* (note the different order of the words) from acting as priests.

9. *And David built.* I. Chron. xi. 8 has *and he built the city*.

From Millo. Better, *from the Millo*. This must have been a well-known feature, but its nature and situation are uncertain. Probably it was a mound or tower "covering some narrow approach from the north" (G. A. Smith), and David may have connected it with the wall of his city by means of an embankment, which Solomon at a later time reconstructed or enlarged (I. Kings xi. 27). The LXX. translates *the Millo* by ἡ ἄκρα.

10. *The LORD, the God of hosts.* The LXX. gives as an equivalent for this title Κύριος παντοκράτωρ, Sym. Κύριος δυνάμεων, Aq. Κύριος στρατειῶν. It has been debated whether Jehovah's *hosts* were originally conceived as earthly armies (viz. those of Israel) or celestial armies. Certainly, the forces of Israel are styled *the hosts of Jehovah* (Ex. vii. 4, xii. 41), and Jehovah is termed *the God of the armies of Israel* (I. xvii. 45); and the particular plural here employed (*Sēbāoth*, as in the *Te Deum*) is only used in connection with human hosts, especially those of Israel. But Jehovah is also represented as attended by, or having at His service, an army of supra-mundane powers (Deut. xxxiii. 2, Joshua

II. SAM., V. 11-12. JERUSALEM: METROPOLIS OF THE KINGDOM.

¹ See I. Chr. xiv. 1-16.

- 11 ¹And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and
12 they built David an house. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

v. 14, II. *Kings* vi. 17, *Zech.* xiv. 5, *Joel* iii. 11) to whom the term *God's hosts* (*Sēbāim*) is also applied (*Ps.* ciii. 21, cxlviii. 2); and since from very early times His activity was associated with commotions in the heavens, hailstones being His missiles (*Joshua* x. 11), the driving storm His chariot (xxii. 11), and the lightning the glancing of His spear or arrows (*Hab.* iii. 11, *Ps.* lxxvii. 17), this is perhaps the original conception. The expression, whatever its primary sense, was particularly adapted to convey the idea, reached by the later Hebrew prophets, that Jehovah, as the sole God, had all agencies at His command, whether the angels of heaven, or the armies of men, or the forces of nature (see its suggestive use in *Isa.* ii. 12, xiii. 4, li. 15, *Amos* iv. 13).

11. *Hiram*. There may be some error in the name. Hiram, according to Josephus, was a contemporary of Solomon's, the eleventh year of his reign being the year of Solomon's accession (*Ant.* viii. 3, § 1), and if so, he can scarcely have been on the throne of Tyre when David ascended the throne of Israel (for the embassy from Tyre was most likely intended to congratulate David on the occasion). Either Josephus' figures are in error, or Abibaal, Hiram's father, is meant (cp. Kittel, *Hist. Heb.* ii. p. 157).

Tyre. The city, situated between Zidon and Acco (Acre), was built partly on a rocky island and partly on the mainland, to which the island is now joined. It was from the island, which was about a mile long and three quarters of a mile wide, that the city received its name ("Rock"). The initial consonant in Hebrew and Phœnician is not *T* but *Ts* (š): and hence, though the name was represented by *Týpos* in Greek, it was called *Sarra* in Latin, both the *T* and the *S* being imperfect equivalents.

Cedar trees. These, felled in Lebanon, were well fitted for building purposes, their wood being described as "close grained, sound to the heart, fragrant, and of a pleasing colour," and as "indestructible by dry rot or borers" (Hastings, *DB.* i., p. 365).

12. *Had established him king*. The prosperous commencement of his reign was regarded as evidence of the Divine favour.

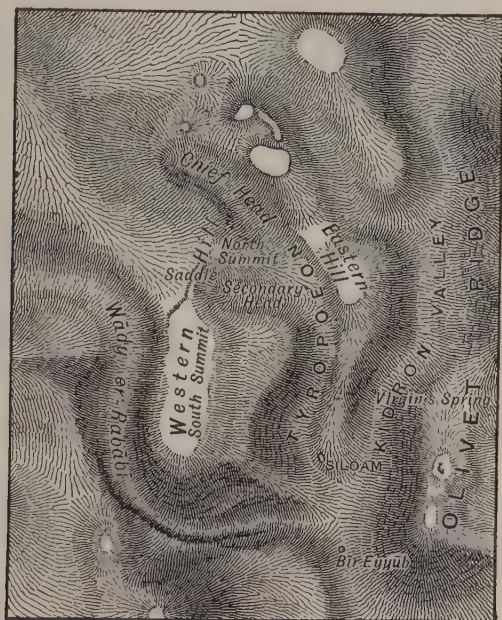
ADDITIONAL NOTE.

The Name and Situation of Jerusalem.

1. The earliest known name of the place is *Urusalim*, as in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets.¹ This is Babylonian; but it is uncertain whether it is the original name from which the Hebrew name *Jerusalem* (*Yerushalaim*) was derived, or whether it is a Babylonian adaptation of the native name. In the former case its meaning is *city of Salim* (Salim being a god known in Phœnicia, Assyria, and North Arabia (S. A. Cook)): in the latter case its signification is doubtful, being possibly one of the following (1) *Shalim founds*, (2) *Shalim casts* (the lot), (3) *He* (the God) *casts a perfect* (lot), (4) *hearth of peace* (see G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem* i., p. 250 f.)

¹ For these see p. 106.

2. The site of modern Jerusalem consists of twin hills, connected on the N. with a plateau, but surrounded on the E., S., and W. by deep valleys, and originally separated from each other by another valley, which now is only a shallow depression, but in ancient times was of considerable depth. The valley on the E. is the ravine of the Kidron, now called the *Wādy Sitti Mariam*; that on the W. is the glen of the Son of Hinnom, the modern *Wādy er Rababi*; and the two together unite on the S. of the city at the modern *Bir Eyyūb*, which is probably the *En-rogel* of xvii. 17. The shallower valley between the two hills is now known as *El Wād*, the *Tyropæon* of Josephus (*BJ*, v. 4, 1).



THE SITE OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM

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Of the two main hills the *western* is regarded by many as the site of the Jebusite fortress and the City of David. It is the higher of the two, and the identification has the support of Josephus, who says that it was called the citadel or fort (*φρούριον*) by king David. But it is long and broad, without any outstanding prominence upon it suitable for a citadel; and the *wādies* that flank it lack water: consequently probability favours the view that the Jerusalem of David's time was situated on the southern extremity of the *eastern* hill. (a) Though lower than the adjoining western hill, this is more of an eminence, for not only is it flanked by the

II. SAM., V. JERUSALEM: METROPOLIS OF THE KINGDOM.

Kidron and the Tyropœon valleys, but even on the north it was once separated from a third hill (rather lower than itself) by a broad valley which at a later time was filled up (Josephus, *l.c.*). (b) In the Kidron valley there is the Gihon (the modern *Virgin's*) spring, which, though it could not be included within the walls of the fortress, could be reached by a shaft, which has been discovered. (c) According to *Neh.* iii. 15 stairs led down from the city of David to the pool of *Shelah*. This is almost certainly the pool of Shiloah or Siloam lying slightly to the W. of the southern end of the eastern hill, and connected with Gihon first by an open conduit (*Isa.* vii. 3), and afterwards by a subterranean tunnel, constructed by Hezekiah (II. *Kings* xx. 20).

If the site of Zion, the city of David, was the southern extremity of the eastern hill (called *Ophel*), the site of the Temple erected by Solomon was the hill mentioned by Josephus as lying to the north of it; for the Temple was not included within the city of David (I. *Kings* viii. 1). The name *Mount Zion*, however, came later to be used comprehensively for the whole of the eastern ridge, including the Temple site (see I. *Macc.* iv. 36, 37). The *Millo*, a word derived from a root meaning "to fill" (Aquila's rendering of it is *πλήρωμα*), was perhaps a mound in the broad valley between Zion (in the limited sense of the name) and the Temple hill.¹

Jerusalem in David's time, if it was confined to Ophel, must have covered quite a small area, probably not exceeding in circumference 1,420 yards. Measurements taken at Gezer, which was a city of considerable importance at that time, similarly show that its walls only extended about 1,500 yards round.²

*Important Incidents in the History of Jerusalem.*³

circ. 1010 B.C.	Taken by David.	136 A.D.	City rebuilt by Hadrian.
967	First Temple built by Solomon.	614	City taken by the Persians.
587	City taken by Nebuchadrezzar.	629	Re-taken by Heraclius.
537	Re-occupied by the Jews.	637	Taken by the Mohammedans.
516	Second Temple dedicated.	1099	Taken by the Crusaders.
168	City taken by Antiochus Epiphanes and Temple desecrated.	1187	Taken by Saladin.
165	Temple cleansed by Judas Maccabæus.	1229	Surrendered to the Emperor Frederic II.
63	City taken by Pompey.	1244	Taken by the Tartars.
11	Third Temple built by Herod.	1247	Taken by the Sultan of Egypt.
70 A.D.	City taken and Temple destroyed by Titus.	1517	Taken by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I.
		1917	Taken from the Turks by the Allied Forces of Great Britain, France, and Italy.

¹ A gully is said to have been discovered between the two.

² G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, i., p. 143.

³ Many of these are derived from Hastings, *DB.* ii., p. 589, 590.

THE SONS BORN TO DAVID IN JERUSALEM. II. SAM., V. 13-16.

vv. 13-16. *The Sons born to David in Jerusalem.*

As David's wealth and power increased, his harem was enlarged in proportion. In *Deut.* xvii. 17 a warning is directed against the multiplication of wives by a Hebrew sovereign, lest they should turn his heart from Jehovah (since they would often be foreign princesses), but the warning is of later origin than David's time, and probably was inspired by the experience of what happened in the reign of Solomon (*I. Kings* xi. 1, 2). On the distinction between wives and concubines see on iii. 7.

- 13 And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron : and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.
14 And these be the names of those that were born unto
15 him in Jerusalem ; Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, and Ibhar, and Elishua ; and
16 Nepheg, and Japhia ; and Elishama, and ¹Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹ In I. Chr.
xiv. 7,
Beeliada.

13. *Out of Jerusalem.* I *Chron.* xiv. 3 has *in* (or *at*) *Jerusalem* (cp. v. 14), a confusion of *in* and *at*.

14-16. The list of David's sons, here given (which is additional to that in iii. 2-5) varies in some measure from two others contained in I. *Chron.* iii. 5-8, and I. *Chron.* xiv. 4-7. The differences will be best observed if the lists are arranged in parallel columns :—

II. Sam. v. 14-16.	I. Chron. iii. 5-8.	I. Chron. xiv. 4-7.
1. Shammua.	Shimea.	Shammua.
2. Shobab.	Shobab.	Shobab.
3. Nathan.	Nathan.	Nathan.
4. Solomon	Solomon.	Solomon.
5. Ibhar.	Ibhar.	Ibhar.
6. Elishua.	Elishama.	Elishua.
	Eliphelet.	Elpelet.
	Nogah.	Nogah.
7. Nepheg.	Nepheg.	Nepheg.
8. Japhia.	Japhia.	Japhia.
9. Elishama.	Elishama.	Elishama.
10. Eliada.	Eliada.	Beeliada.
11. Eliphelet.	Eliphelet.	Eliphelet.

But most of the differences disappear when errors of transcription are allowed for. The first name in I. *Chron.* iii. is clearly a corruption of *Shammua* ; the sixth name in I. *Chron.* iii., *Elishama*, must be a mistake for *Elishua*, which appears in the other two lists ; the next name in both lists from Ch., *Eliphelet* (*Elpelet*), is a duplicate of the last name in all three lists ; whilst the name *Nogah* has perhaps arisen by a scribal blunder from the succeeding name *Nepheg*. The only interesting variant is *Beeliada* in I. *Chron.* xiv., which corresponds to *Eliada* in the other two lists. It is doubtless the original form of the name, for which *Eliada* was afterwards substituted to avoid the mention of Baal (see p. 90).

vv. 17-25. David and the Philistines.

David's relations with the Philistines during the first years of his reign are not quite easy to determine. Prior to the death of Saul he had been a subject of Achish, king of Gath (I. xxix. 8); and so long as he was merely king of Judah, he was probably a vassal. But his accession to the throne of all Israel altered the situation, and the Philistines seem to have made an effort to crush him before he could consolidate his enlarged kingdom. The incidents here recounted must have preceded the acquisition of Jerusalem, which he could not attempt to take until he was free from danger of an attack on the flank or rear. This section cannot originally have been the sequel of the preceding *vv.* 6-12, for the *hold* of *v.* 17 is alluded to as though it had been previously mentioned, and yet it cannot be the stronghold of the Jebusites (see note there). The section *vv.* 17-25 is really the sequel of *v.* 3. The passage may once have stood in connection with xxiii. 13-17, which also relates to the period when the Philistines were in the valley of Rephaim, and fits in chronologically between *v.* 17 and *vv.* 18-21 here (cp. Kittel, *Hist. Heb.* ii., p. 151).

17 **A**ND when the Philistines heard that they had
 anointed David king over Israel, all the
 Philistines went up to seek David: and David
 heard of it, and went down to the hold. Now the
 18 Philistines had come and spread themselves in the

The LXX. in II. Sam. v. gives 24 names, some being evidently duplicates. Only two of the names in any of the lists are of importance. *Solomon* became David's successor, and *Nathan* appears in the genealogy of our Lord given in *Luke* iii. 31.

17. *Over Israel.* I. Chron. xiv. 8 preferably has *over all Israel*.

Went down to the hold. This was clearly not the *strong hold* of *vv.* 7, 9, for Jerusalem occupied an elevated position, and the verb *went down* would be inappropriate. The place meant is probably Adullam (designated as a *hold* in I. xxii. 1, 5, II. xxiii. 14) on the edge of the Shephelah. It is a hill which is described as "very defensible. There is water in the valley, and near the top some large low caves" (G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 229) Thither David would descend from Hebron, and from thence, in attacking the Philistines who lay in the valley of Rephaim nearer Jerusalem than himself, he would go *up* (*v.* 19).

18. *The valley of Rephaim.* This stretched to the SW. of Jerusalem. The name (translated in the LXX. by τὴν κοιλάδα τῶν τιτάνων) recalls the memory of an aboriginal race of giants who inhabited the country both E. and W. of the Jordan before the occupation of different parts of it by the Moabites, Ammonites, Israelites, and Philistines (see *Gen.* xiv. 5, *Deut.* ii. 11, 20, *Joshua* xii. 4, xvii. 15, II. Sam. xxi. 16-22 mg.). The last passage cited suggests that the Rephaim who survived in Philistine territory amalgamated with their conquerors and fought with them against

19 valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of the LORD, saying Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will certainly
 20 deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and he said, The LORD hath ¹broken mine enemies before me, like the breach of waters. Therefore
 21 he called the name of that place ²Baal-perazim.
 22 And they left their images there, and David and his men took them away. And the Philistines
 23 came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up: make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over

¹ Or, broken forth upon mine enemies.
² That is, The place of breakings forth.

Israel. The giant Goliath (xxi. 19) was probably descended from them. The valley of Rephaim was a corn-growing district (*Isa.* xvii. 5). It was perhaps not so much a single valley as a system of valleys, in which the Philistines spread themselves. At the lower end of it they would be between David (at Adullam) and Bethlehem (xxiii. 14).

19. *Inquired of the LORD.* I.e., through the ephod in the care of the priest (see on ii. 1). It will be noticed that the question here virtually presents two alternatives, so that a decision between them could be given by the drawing of one of two stones or other small objects.

20. *Broken mine enemies.* This seems better than the mg., *broken forth upon mine enemies*, since the construction here differs from that in vi. 8.

Baal-perazim. Probably the same as *mount Perazim* mentioned in *Isa.* xxviii. 21. The place-name means "lord of breaches," and since Jehovah was manifestly the God who "broke" Israel's foes and ensured His people's success, the appellation confirms the view that *Baal* at this time was a title of Jehovah. But in other place-names within the O.T. in which the name Baal occurs, such as Baal-peor, Baal-gad, Baal-zephon, etc., it is a title of a heathen deity.

21. *Their images.* These had been brought into the battle by the Philistines (just as the Ark on a previous occasion had been brought by the Hebrews, I. iv. 3) in order to secure Divine assistance (cp. II. Chr. xxv. 14). The LXX. here, and the Heb. in the parallel I. Chron. xiv. 12 have *their gods*. This is probably original, later copyists having substituted *their images* here, in order to refuse the name *gods* to the objects of heathen worship.

Took them away. I.e., as trophies. In I. Chron. xiv. 12 David is represented as ordering their destruction by fire, in accordance with the direction in *Deut.* vii. 5, 25 (see p. 15).

23. *Thou shalt not go up.* The LXX. adds *to meet them*. A frontal attack was forbidden, and instead of such, a manœuvre which would bring David on the flank of his enemies was enjoined.

¹ Or, *balsam trees*.

- 24 against the ¹mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then is the LORD gone out before thee to
- 25 smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and smote the Philistines from ²Geba until thou come to Gezer.

² In I. Chr. xiv. 16, Gibeon.

The mulberry trees. The actual nature of the trees signified is uncertain. The mg. gives *balsam trees*; Aq. here and the LXX. in I. *Chron.* xiv. 14 have *pear trees*; and the rustling mentioned in the next *v.* has suggested *poplars* or *aspens*. They seem to have been trees that loved a dry, waterless soil, hence the contrast implied in *Ps.* lxxxiv. 6 (see mg.). The particular plantation to which allusion is made in the oracle probably served to screen the attacking force.

24. *The sound of marching.* Trees were anciently supposed to be the abodes of spirits, or at least to be manifestations of divine life and power. Hence they were often the source of oracles (see *Judges* ix. 37 mg.) conveyed through soothsayers or prophets, who took up their position near them, and might be thought to be inspired by the spirit of the tree (see *Judges* iv. 5). The oak (or oaks) of *Moreh* (*Gen.* xii. 6, *Deut.* xi. 30) means "the oak (oaks) of an instructor (or revealer)." Similarly among the Greeks the oracles obtained at Dodona were derived from an oak tree, and interpreted by the Silloi. In the present instance, however, the rustling of the mulberry trees by reason of the wind blowing through them is regarded merely as an indication of Jehovah's approach in the rising storm, for a storm-wind was thought to be His chariot (see on xxii. 11). Josephus, on the other hand, represents that the trees moved without any wind blowing (*Ant.* vii. 4, §1).

Thou shalt bestir thyself. Better, *Thou shalt act with decision.*

Is . . . gone out. Better, *will have gone out.*

25. *Geba.* The LXX. here, and I. *Chron.* xiv. 16, replace *Geba* by *Gibeon*, which is mentioned together with *Perazim* in *Isa.* xxviii. 21. As the valley of *Rephaim* was SW. of Jerusalem, and *Gibeon* NW. of the same city, an advance from *Gibeon* would bring David upon his enemies' flank (see *v.* 23). *Geba*, NNE. of Jerusalem, would be a much less suitable quarter from which to make the advance. Nevertheless, the plan of operations is a little difficult to follow, since the Philistines, though taken on the left flank, were apparently driven towards *Gezer*, WNW. of Jerusalem.

Gezer. Now *Tell Jezzer*, on the edge of the Shephelah, lying, in respect of Jerusalem, a little N. of W. It stands on a ridge, high and isolated, "a very strong post and striking landmark" (G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 216). At the conquest of western Canaan by Joshua, it was unsubdued (*Judges* i. 29), and remained Canaanite until its inhabitants were driven out in the reign of Solomon by the contemporary king of Egypt, who gave it as a dowry to his daughter, on her marriage to the Israelite sovereign (*I. Kings* ix. 16).

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRANSFER OF THE ARK TO THE NEW CAPITAL.

In the disastrous battle of Ebenezer, in which Israel was defeated by the Philistines, the Ark was captured and taken to various cities of Philistia in succession, whence it had to be removed in consequence of an outbreak of bubonic plague, which was interpreted as a mark of Divine resentment. It was eventually carried to Kiriath-jearim and placed in the house of Abinadab, whose son Eleazar was consecrated to act as priest. Kiriath-jearim had probably fallen under the control of the Philistines in consequence of Saul's defeat at Gilboa; and it was only after David had successfully coped with their domination that it was in his power to recover it. The city was Gibeonite, and probably the defeat of the Philistines at Gibeon (see on v. 25) had opened up access to it. Since the Ark, as the visible symbol of Jehovah, was believed to be a *palladium*, it was natural that David should desire to ensure the safety of his new capital by placing it within it.

¹ **A**ND David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

² And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him, from Baale Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, ²which is called by the Name, even the name of the LORD of hosts

¹ See I. Chr. xiii. 5-14.

² Heb. *whereupon is called the Name.*

1. *Again gathered together*, etc. This seems to imply a previous muster of troops, but as no mention of such occurs in the preceding context, ch. vi. can scarcely be the original sequel of ch. v.

Thirty thousand. The LXX. has *seventy thousand*. The large number suggests that a military expedition was needed to take Kiriath-jearim and secure possession of the Ark. The actual removal, accompanied by a festal procession, would only be possible after tranquillity was restored.

2. *From Baale Judah.* This, as shown by the subsequent occurrence of *from thence* and by the parallel in I. Chron. xiii. 6, must be replaced by *to Baale Judah* (or perhaps *to Baal Judah*). Baal (or Baale) Judah was another name for Kiriath-jearim, which was also called *Baalath* (I. Chron. xiii. 6) and *Kiriath-baal* (Joshua. xv. 60). The place, the name of which means "The Town of the Woods," lay on the W. border of Benjamin, probably in the neighbourhood of "the rugged wooded highlands which look down on the basin of Sorek" (G. A. Smith); but its exact site is disputed. It is *the field of the wood* of Ps. cxxxii. 6.

To bring up. The LXX. has *ἐν ἀναβάσει τοῦ ἀναγαγεῖν*, which is probably an instance of a duplicate rendering of the single Heb. verb (*Studia Biblica*, i., p. 36), and illustrates the tendency to conflate readings (cp. v. 5).

Which is called by the Name. Literally, *over which is called the Name*, the words implying that the Ark was the possession of Jehovah (cp. xii. 28,

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¹ Or, *dwelleth between*.

² Or, *Gibeah*.

³ See I. Chr. xiii. 8.

⁴ Or, *cypress*.

3 that ¹sitteth upon the cherubim. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in ²the hill : and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the
4 new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in ²the hill, with the ark
5 of God : and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD
³with all manner of *instruments made of* ⁴fir wood, and

note). In a primitive stage of culture a personal name was regarded as part of the person, so that *names* (*ὀνόματα*) are often used where we should say *persons* (see *Num.* xxvi. 53 and cp. *Acts* i. 15, mg., *Rev.* iii. 4), and to "call a name" over an object was to bring the object into close relation with, and under the protection of, the owner of the name. For the absolute use of the Name see *Lev.* xxiv. 11, and cp. the usage in *Acts* v. 41 (where it refers to Jesus). But the duplication of the Name here does not occur in the LXX., and is perhaps a scribal error.

The cherubim. A cherub is associated in xxii. 11 (= *Ps.* xviii. 10) with the wind, and probably represented the storm upon which Jehovah was thought to ride. Two emblems symbolizing this elemental force, and consisting of gilded winged figures are stated in *Ex.* xxv. 18, 21, to have been placed on the *mercy-seat* (or *propitiatory*) above the Ark, but a detailed description of their appearance is not given. They are not likely to have been human figures, which would scarcely have been tolerated. In *Ezek.* i. 6 f., cherubs are represented as having four faces, those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, but from x. 14 it appears that the ox-face was strictly "the face of the cherub," so that the two figures over the *mercy-seat* were probably winged oxen.

3. *A new cart.* In connection with sacred persons, objects, or purposes it was deemed appropriate to employ nothing which had previously been applied to secular use (cp. I. vi. 7, *Num.* xix. 2, *Deut.* xxi. 3, *Luke* xix. 30). In certain sections of the Pentateuch the conveyance of the Ark is directed to be entrusted solely to the Levites, who are to carry it (*Num.* iv. 15) after it has been covered up by the Priests (*Num.* iv. 5). The ignoring, by David, of the regulation enjoined in the passage cited contributes to the evidence for the later origin of the code of laws comprising it.

4. *And they . . . hill.* These words in this v. are clearly an accidental repetition of part of v. 3 ; the duplication appears neither in the LXX. here nor in I. *Chron.* xiii. 7.

With the ark of God. If the preceding part of v. 4 is omitted, these words connect with v. 3 ; but between these and the conclusion of v. 3 something has been lost describing what Uzzah did (to correspond to the following statement about Ahio), e.g. *And Uzzah went with* (i.e., beside) *the ark*.

5. *With all manner . . . wood.* The words, literally rendered, mean *with all trees* (or *timbers*) *of fir wood*, and make little sense. Some corruption must have crept into the text. I. *Chron.* xiii. 8 has, more intelligibly, *with all their might, even with songs*, whilst the LXX. here has *ἐν ὀργάνοις ἡρμουςμένοις, ἐν ἰσχύι καὶ ἐν ψδαῖς*, which is a duplicate

with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels,
and with ¹castanets, and with cymbals. And when
6 they came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah
put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold
7 of it; for the oxen ²stumbled. And the anger of
the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God
smote him there for his ³error; and there he died by

¹ Or, *sistra*.

² Or, *were
restive*. Or,
*threw it
down*.

³ Or,
rashness.

rendering, made up of a corrupted reading combined with the true reading (as represented in *Chron.*). When the text has been emended after *Chron.*, the rendering will be, *And David and all the house of Israel played before Jehovah with all their might, even with songs* (cp. v. 14). The Hebrew for this could easily be corrupted into the existing text.

Harps . . . psalteries. There is some uncertainty as to the difference between the two instruments thus translated, representing in Hebrew the words *cinnôr* and *nēbhēl* respectively. According to Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 12, 3) the former (LXX. *κινύρα*) had ten strings and was played with a plectrum, whilst the latter (LXX. *νάβλη*) had twelve and was played with the fingers. But if so, they were probably dissimilar in shape also, the *cinnôr* having a quadrangular frame, with the sound-box at the base, whereas the *nēbhēl* was roughly triangular, with the sound-box on one side. If this is approximately correct, the best English equivalents are, for the *cinnôr* "lyre" and for the *nēbhēl* "harp" (see Hastings, *DB.* iii. 459, 460, where illustrations are given). Another view is that the Heb. *nēbhēl* was an instrument resembling a guitar, but played with a plectrum; if so, the preferable rendering of the word is *lute* (see Driver, *Par. Ps.* p. 475).

Timbrels. These were small drums, probably played by the hand.

Castanets. In the mg. *sistra* (the rendering of Aq., Sym. and the Vulg.). These were a variety of rattle consisting of "two thin metal plates, bent together at the top, and fitted with a handle at the bottom. The plates were pierced with holes through which rods were passed having rings at their ends" (Hastings, *DB.* iii. 463).

Cymbals. These were plate-like metal instruments that could be clashed together.

6. *Nacon.* In I. *Chron.* xiii. 9 *Chidon*.

Stumbled. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. The same word is rendered in II. *Kings* ix. 33, *Ps.* cxli. 6 by *throw down*, so here perhaps it signifies *the oxen let it* (the Ark) *fall*. The LXX. treats the verb as transitive—*ἐτι περιέσπασεν αὐτὴν ὁ μόσχος*.

7. *Smote him.* The sudden death of Uzzah, due perhaps to heart disease, was accounted for, in the spirit of the times, by his having touched so holy an object as the Ark without due precautions: cp. I. vi. 19. Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 4, § 2) attributes the occurrence to the fact that Uzzah was not a priest.

His error. The mg. has *his rashness*, following the Alexandrine MS. of the LXX., which has *ἐπὶ τῇ προπετείᾳ*, and the Vulg. *super temeritate*. But the Heb. is strange in form, and is probably a corruption of the opening words of the parallel in I. *Chron.* xiii. 10, *because he put forth his hand to the ark*.

¹ That is,
The breach
of Uzzah.

- 8 the ark of God. And David was displeased, because the LORD had broken forth upon Uzzah : and he called that place ¹Perez-uzzah, unto this day.
9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day ; and he said, How shall the ark of the LORD come unto
10 me ? So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David ; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the
11 Gittite. And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months : and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his house.
12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.
²And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David
13 with joy. And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed
14 an ox and a fatling. And David danced before the

² See I. Chr.
xv. 25—
xvi. 3.

10. *Obed-edom the Gittite.* As a native of Gath, and so a Philistine, he must have been one of the many "sojourners" or naturalized foreigners resident in the land (see on i. 13). In I. *Chron.* xv. 18, 24, he is reckoned among the Levites, a change made in order to bring the less restricted usage of David's time into conformity with the later idea (see on v. 3) that the Ark could only be entrusted to Levites. It has been needlessly attempted to reconcile the two accounts by assuming that *Gittite* here means a native of the Levitical city of Gath-rimmon (*Josh.* xxi. 24, 25). The name *Obed-edom* is in form parallel to *Obadiah* ; and as the latter means "servant of Jehovah," so *Obed-edom* seems to mean "servant of Edom," a god otherwise unknown.

12. *The LORD hath blessed,* etc. This was interpreted as an indication that the anger of Jehovah, manifested by what had happened to Uzzah, had ceased. *LXX.* adds καὶ εἶπε Δαυεὶδ, Επιστρέψω τὴν εὐλογίαν (or τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν) εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, and the Old Latin has *Ibo et reducam arcam cum benedictione in domum meam.*

13. *They that bare the Ark.* Since the conveyance of the Ark in a cart had been attended by misfortune, on this occasion it was carried on men's shoulders, though there is nothing to indicate who the bearers were. In I. *Chron.* xv. 26, the bearers are Levites, but in *Num.* iv. 15 it is directed that the Ark should be borne by the Kohathites, descendants of one of the three sons of Aaron. This regulation was probably of late (post-Exilic) origin.

Had gone six paces. A tentative start was made, and since no sign of Divine displeasure occurred, a sacrifice was offered, both in gratitude for the successful beginning of the journey and to intreat Jehovah's favour for its safe completion.

14. *And David danced,* etc. The dancing was religious in character. Dancing was a feature of religious rites in many places of the ancient

LORD with all his might; and David was girded with
 15 a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel
 brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and
 16 with the sound of the trumpet. And it was so, as
 the ark of the LORD came into the city of David,
 that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the
 window, and saw king David leaping and dancing
 before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.
 17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set
 it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David
 had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings
 18 and peace offerings before the LORD. And when
 David had made an end of offering the burnt offering
 and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the

world, *e.g.*, at Rome (where the priests of Mars obtained their name of *Salii* from their leaping) and at Delos (Verg. *A.* iv. 144-6). It is, no doubt, a natural expression of enthusiasm and joy; but there is reason to think that it was often intended to scare away evil spirits, especially on occasions when it was particularly desired that no evil influence should interfere with some important undertaking. For religious dancers among the Hebrews see *Ex.* xxxii. 19, *Judges* xxi. 19-21, *Ps.* cxlix. 3, cl. 4; and cp. also I. *Kings* xviii. 26 ("the leaping" of the priests of Baal). Dancing still enters into the religious exercises of eastern dervishes.

Before the LORD. Jehovah's presence was clearly associated with the Ark (cp. *Num.* x. 35-36, and see p. 64).

A linen ephod. A short garment, usually worn by priests or by ministrants in holy rites (cp. I. ii. 18).

15. *The trumpet.* Better, *the horn*, see on ii. 28.

In I. *Chron.* xvi. parts of three psalms (cv. 1-15, xcvi. 1-13a, and cvi. 47, 48) are represented as used by David's direction on the occasion here described, but all of them are probably post-Exilic in origin (see Kirkpatrick, *Psalms* iii., pp. 575, 614, 624).

The window. Windows of houses at this period were only protected by lattice-work (cp. *Judges* v. 28, *Prov.* vii. 6).

17. *The tent.* Not the Tent of meeting mentioned in the Pentateuch, but a tent erected for the occasion.

Burnt offerings . . . peace offerings. The distinction between these lay in the fact that in the former the victim was wholly consumed, as though conveyed to the deity in its entirety through the medium of the smoke and savour (cp. *Gen.* viii. 21); in the latter only a portion of the victim was burnt on the altar, the rest of the flesh affording a festal banquet for the worshippers, who thereby feasted with the deity,

18. *He blessed.* In *Num.* vi. 23-27 the privilege of blessing the people with the name of Jehovah is assigned to the priests, the sons of Aaron; but it is clear both from the present passage and I. *Kings* viii. 14, 55 that during the early monarchy sovereigns were accustomed to perform this and other religious functions (cp. v. 13, 17), and that the prerogative of blessing was not confined to a priestly order (see p. 66).

¹ Or. of wine.

- 19 name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to every one a cake of bread, and a portion ¹of flesh, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed every one to his house.
- 20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows
- 21 shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, *It was before the LORD*, which chose me above thy father, and above all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of the LORD, over Israel :
- 22 therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight : but of the handmaids which thou hast

In the name. Perhaps better, *by the name*. Amongst primitive peoples the name of a person had almost a personality of its own (cp. p. 116); and if the Person was Divine, His name exerted a supernatural power, so that a blessing or a curse in which it was used had a magical potency and fulfilled itself independently of a change of mind on the part of any one who had pronounced it (cp. *Gen.* xxvii. 33, *Num.* xxiii. 20, and for illustrations of the efficacy of curses in which the Divine name occurred see *Judges* ix. 20, 57, *II. Kings* ii. 24).

19. *A portion of flesh.* The word rendered *portion* is of uncertain meaning. The explanation that the second gift was meat seems to come from the Vulgate, which has *roasted beef*. Aq. and Sym. appear to regard it as meaning a cake made with honey.

A cake of raisins. Such cakes are mentioned in connection with religious feasts in *Hos.* iii. 1.

20. *How glorious was, etc.* Better, *How honoured did the king of Israel make himself to-day*, for the same verb is used here as in v. 22.

The handmaids of his servants. I.e., the lowest of servants.

Vain. Better, *good-for-nothing* (literally *empty*): cp. *Judges* ix. 4, xi. 3.

21. *It was before the LORD.* In the Heb. some words of David's reply are missing, but occur in the Vatican MS. of the LXX., which has *Before Jehovah I will dance*. This corresponds to the final clause of the v. *Before Jehovah I will play*. The king warmly retorts to Michal that his abandonment of dignity was explained and justified by the intensity of his gratitude to Jehovah who had promoted him to rule over His people. Sacrifice of dignity was preferable to suppression of his thankful emotion.

22. David contends that Michal's assertion that he had degraded himself in the opinion of his servants is unfounded; they would continue to honour him even if he humbled himself yet further. For *in mine own sight* the LXX. has preferably *in thy sight*.

23 spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

CHAPTER VII.

JEHOVAH'S PROMISE AND DAVID'S GRATITUDE.

This chapter is among the few passages in II. *Sam.* which can be with some confidence assigned to the later of the two main sources of the work (designated in the *Introd.* as *B*, see p. 16 f.). All these sections derived from this source "in their present form have some affinities in thought and expression with *Deut.*" (Driver, *LOT.* p. 173). Their date is probably about the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century. Accordingly, this chapter is separated by a considerable interval from the incident which it relates, and reflects the expectations of a period when the throne of David had every appearance of being firmly established. These expectations take the form of a threefold prediction: (1) that the house of David should be established for ever; (2) that David's son should build a house for Jehovah¹; (3) that David's successive descendants should be the sons of God. The first and third of these predictions contributed greatly to foster the growth of the Messianic hope, which persisted long after the last Hebrew kingdom had disappeared. Even after the Hebrew race had been for centuries under alien rule, the belief continued to be cherished by the Jewish people that the kingdom of Israel would be re-established, and the glories of David's reign restored (cp. *Ps.* lxxxix. 19-37, *Acts.* i. 6).

vv. 1-17. *Jehovah promises permanence to David's dynasty.*

1 **A**ND it came to pass, when the king dwelt in
his house, and the LORD had given him rest
2 from all his enemies round about, that the
king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell
in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth
3 within curtains. And Nathan said to the king,

¹ See I. Chr. xvii.

23. Whether Michal's childlessness is regarded as expressly inflicted by Jehovah (cp. I. i. 6, *Gen.* xx. 18) or as due to David's seclusion of her does not appear.

1. *In his house.* I.e. the palace, the building of which is mentioned in v. 11. *Had given him rest.* The expression occurs in *Deut.* xii. 10, xxv. 19: cp. also *Joshua* xxiii. 1, I. *Kings* v. 4.

2. *Nathan the prophet.* Nathan is a prominent figure in the later history of David's reign (see ch. xii., I. *Kings* i. 8 f., and cp. I. *Chron.* xxix. 29, II. *Chron.* ix. 29).

Within curtains. I.e. within the tent in which the Ark was temporarily housed (vi. 17). David is represented as urging that it was

¹ On this see note on v. 13.

¹ In I. Chr. xvii. 6, *any of the judges.*

² Or, *pasture.*

3 Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is
4 with thee. And it came to pass the same night,
that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,
5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD,
Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?
6 for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that
I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt,
even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in
7 a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked
with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with
¹any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to
feed my people Israel, saying, Why have ye not
8 built me an house of cedar? Now therefore thus
shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith
the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the ²sheepcote,
from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be

unfitting that he should have a permanent habitation whilst the Ark, representing Jehovah, had a shelter suitable only under nomadic conditions.

3. *Go, do, etc.* The contrast between this encouragement and the prohibition contained in the following *vv.* is designed to emphasize the difference between the prophet's own judgment and the divine revelation of which he was subsequently the channel.

5. *Shalt thou, etc.* In the LXX. here and in I. Chron. xvii. 4 the prohibition is expressed more positively, *Thou shalt not, etc.* The pronoun *thou* is emphatic.

6. *Have walked, etc.* The sense is more clearly expressed in I. Chron. xvii. 5, *I have gone from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling.* Jehovah, during the period that His people were wanderers in the desert after the exodus, had accompanied their movements. The word rendered *tabernacle* is almost exclusively used of Jehovah's tent.

7. *Tribes.* No tribe had enjoyed a monopoly of authority over the rest, and it is unsatisfactory (in spite of I. Chron. xxviii. 4) to understand the phrase of the several tribes from whom successive leaders rose (Othniel from Judah, Ehud from Benjamin, Deborah from Ephraim, Gideon from Manasseh, etc.); so that, although the LXX. and Vulg. support the Heb. here, there can be little doubt that the right reading is preserved in I. Chron. xvii. 6, which has *judges*. The difference is only that between 1 and 2. The general tenor of *vv.* 5-7 amounts to an expression of Jehovah's preference for the simple conditions under which He had hitherto been worshipped.

8. *I took thee, etc.* The divine favour which David had so conspicuously enjoyed through his elevation from a humble origin to the dignity of king was a guarantee for the continuance of his dynasty.

The sheepcote. Cp. LXX. ἐκ τῆς μάνδρας. But better (with the mg.), *the pasture*; Vulg. *de pascuis*, Sym. νομῆς.

- 9 'prince over my people, over Israel: and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the
 10 great ones that are in the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and
 10 be moved no more; neither shall the children of wicked-
 11 ness afflict them any more, as at the first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I ²will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover the LORD telleth thee
 12 that the LORD will make thee an house. When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.
 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

¹ Or, *leader*.² Or, *have caused*.

9. *A great name.* The adjective is probably an accidental insertion; it does not occur in the LXX. (which has *ὀνομαστόν*) or in the parallel passage I. Chron. xvii. 8.

10. *The children of wickedness.* A common Heb. idiom for *the wicked* (see p. 101), here used to describe the various enemies who oppressed the Israelites during the period of the Judges.

11. *And as from the day, etc.* Better, *even from the day*. But the LXX. omits the word rendered *and* or *even*.

Thee . . . thine. Since in vv. 10, 11, Israel and not David is the subject of Jehovah's thoughts, these words are perhaps a slip for *them* and *their*.

The LORD telleth, etc. The change from the first person, which appears in the preceding vv., to the third person introduces impressively the prophecy that follows.

Will make thee an house. I. Chron. xvii. 10 has *will build thee an house*. What building is to be done will be done by God, for the expression "to make (or, to build) a house" had more than one sense, and could mean "to perpetuate a family" as well as "to erect a dwelling" (cp. Ex. i. 21, Ruth iv. 11, Deut. xxv. 9, I. Sam. ii. 35).

12. *Thy seed after thee.* The term *seed* here is used collectively and refers to David's posterity, as appears from v. 16 (cp. also Ps. lxxxix. 29-30).

13. *He shall build, etc.* In this v. the word *seed* is interpreted not as a collective but as a singular, and is understood of Solomon. The v. disturbs the general tenor of the address, which has in view the permanence of David's *dynasty* (vv. 12, 14-16, 19), and must be treated as a parenthesis, if not an insertion intended to render honour to the Temple.

For my name. Jehovah's *name* seems here to have an existence parallel to His own Personality, and is perhaps to be regarded as distinguishing the manifestation of His presence or power on earth from

- 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men;
 15 but my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took
 16 it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established
 17 for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

vv. 18-29. *David's Thanksgiving.*

- 18 **T**HEN David the king went in, and sat before the LORD; and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought

His essential Being, conceived to abide apart from the earth. In *Deut.* the Divine name is especially associated with the Temple, where it could be invoked, and where prayer addressed to Jehovah would be answered (see *Deut.* xii. 5, xvi. 2, 11 and I. *Kings* viii. 29).

14. *His father.* Israel is termed God's son in *Ex.* iv. 22, *Hosea* xi. 1, just as the people of Moab were regarded as the children of Chemosh, the Moabite national god (*Num.* xxi. 29): but this privileged relationship is here specially connected with David's dynasty (*Ps.* lxxxix. 27), and, later, became peculiarly associated with the expected Messianic king (*Ps.* ii. 6, 7).

The rod of men. I.e., with the usual discipline to which men are subject. Similarly *the bread of men* (*Ezek.* xxiv. 17) is the bread that is ordinarily eaten, *the cubit of a man* (*Deut.* iii. 11) an ordinary cubit, *the pen of a man* (*Is.* viii. 1) a pen suitable for making the characters commonly employed. The promise expressed in this *v.* is referred to in *Ps.* lxxxix. 30-37.

15. *My mercy . . . depart.* The LXX., Vulg., and I. *Chron.* xvii. 13 have *I will not take my mercy away.*

From Saul whom. The LXX. and the parallel in I. *Chron.* xvii. 13 have *from him that*, etc., and the difference illustrates how names were inserted by copyists for the sake of clearness.

16. *Thine house . . . thee.* Better (with the LXX.), *his house and his kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me* (see *vv.* 26, 29).

Thy throne. The LXX. and I. *Chron.* xvii. 14 have *his throne.*

17. *This vision.* The term *vision* was originally descriptive of visual sensations, such as those sometimes experienced in dreams and trances; but later it became a current word for revelations received through the intellectual and spiritual faculties, not through the senses (see *Ob.* v. 1, *Nah.* i. 1, *Hab.* ii. 2). The same transition of meaning occurs in the word *seer* (used in *xxiv.* 11).

18. *Sat before the LORD.* I.e., in the tent where the Ark was placed. Sitting is one of the attitudes of worship still in vogue among the Mohammedans and Copts.

19 me thus far? And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; ¹and this too after the manner of men, O Lord God! And what can David say more unto thee? for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord God. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. ²And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem unto himself for a people, and to make him a name and to do great things for you, and terrible things for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst

¹ Or, and is this the law of man, O Lord God?

² Or, And who is like thy people, like Israel, a nation that is alone in the earth &c.

19. *And this, too, after the manner of men.* The Heb. is literally, *and this is the law for man*, which, if the text be correct, must be understood either (1) as an exclamation of surprise that a promise of permanence should be given to the dynasty of a frail man; or (2) as an avowal that such condescension as was shown by Jehovah to David was a reasonable requirement *from one human being towards another*, but was more than could be expected *from God to man*. But both interpretations read a good deal into the Heb., and the text is probably corrupt. Neither the LXX. nor I. Chron. xvii. 17 affords much help.

21. *For thy word's sake.* It is not apparent what word (*i.e.*, promise) is meant; and both LXX. B. and the parallel I. Chron. xvii. 19 have *for thy servant's sake* (the confusion being partly due to the likeness between ו and ר).

All this greatness. Since the greatness was yet in the future, it is best to transpose the word and to render *hast thou wrought to make thy servant know all this greatness*.

23. *And what one . . . whom God went, etc.* The Heb. is literally, *Who is like thy people, even like Israel? Is there one nation whom God went, etc.* But the text should probably be emended (after I. Chron. xvii. 21 and the LXX.) to *Who is like thy people Israel? Is there another nation whom a god went, etc.* (one letter having been duplicated and a ו accidentally mistaken for a ר).

For you. This unexpected address to Israel, where David is represented as speaking to God, can scarcely be original, and should be replaced (after the Vulg.) by *for them*. The LXX. has no pronoun.

For thy land. This is probably an accidental corruption, the true reading being preserved in the LXX. (τοῦ ἐκβαλεῖν) and I. Chron. xvii. 21, *in driving out*, followed by *the nations and their gods* (which occurs in the Heb. at the end of the v., where the words are obviously out of place).

Before thy people. If, in the earlier part of the v., the rendering *God* is rightly replaced by *a god*, then *before thy people* must be changed to *from before his people*.

¹ Or, *been*
bold.

² Or, *begin*
and bless.

to thee out of Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods ?
 24 And thou didst establish to thyself thy people
 Israel to be a people unto thee for ever : and thou,
 25 LORD, becamest their God. And now, O Lord God,
 the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy
 servant, and concerning his house, confirm thou it
 26 for ever, and do as thou hast spoken. And let thy
 name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of
 hosts is God over Israel : and the house of thy
 27 servant David shall be established before thee. For
 thou, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, hast
 revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an
 house : therefore hath thy servant ¹found in his
 28 heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now,
 O Lord God, thou art God, and thy words are truth,
 and thou hast promised this good thing unto thy
 29 servant : now therefore ²let it please thee to bless
 the house of thy servant, that it may continue for
 ever before thee : for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken
 it : and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant
 be blessed for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

This chapter, which probably comes from the compiler, is a summary account (*a*) of David's campaigns against various peoples at different periods ; (*b*) of his officials. It marks a break in the contents of the book, for it closes the record of David's accession to the throne, and of his relations with foreign states, and is followed by the story of his domestic troubles. It should be compared with the list of Saul's public achievements in I. xiv. 47-51. The wars recorded in this epitome are variously treated, for whilst of some (those with Moab, Zobah, Syria, Edom) a few particulars are given, of others (those with Ammon, Amalek) only the names

The differences noted between the Heb. and the LXX. suggest that in the former the passage has been partially converted into an exhortation addressed to *Israel*. The original form of it was probably, *And who is like thy people Israel ? Is there another nation whom a god went to redeem unto himself for a people, and to make himself a name, and to do for them great things and terrible, in driving out from before his people nations and their gods ?*

Which thou redeemedst . . . Egypt. Since the implication of the whole passage is that Israel's God had done for His people what no other nation's god had done for *his*, the same copyist or editor, who altered certain of the pronouns in the way described above, also inserted these words to accentuate what Jehovah had wrought for Israel.

27. *Found in his heart.* Perhaps better, *found courage* (cp. mg.).

are mentioned, though the course of the war against Ammon is described in ch. x.

vv. 1-14. *David's foreign wars.*

- 1¹ **A**ND after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took the ²bridle of the mother city out of the hand of the Philistines. And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became 3 servants to David, and brought presents. David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of

¹ See I. Chr. xviii.

² Or, *Methegammah*.

1. *The bridle of the mother city.* The expression is probably a metaphor for the control exercised by one or other of the Philistine cities over the places in its vicinity. Though the word here translated *mother city* does not elsewhere occur, the rendering is favoured by the fact that the common term for *mother* had this sense in Phœnician (Tyre, for instance, being described on certain coins as "mother of Zidon"): cp. also xx. 19. In I. *Chron.* xviii. 1 there is substituted *Gath and her daughters*¹ (i.e. its dependent villages). This is favoured by the fact that a body of Gittites afterwards formed part of David's bodyguard (see xv. 18). But if Gath is the city meant, it still retained its king at the beginning of Solomon's reign (I. *Kings* ii. 39). Cheyne (*EBi.* i. col. 1027) thinks that the city was Ashdod. For the metaphorical use of *bridle* H. P. Smith, *Sam.*, compares the phrase "to have in leading strings."

2. *Moab.* In I. xxii. 3-5 David is stated to have placed, during his outlawry, his parents under the protection of the king of Moab, and no explanation is given why he should now have attacked Moab and treated it so ruthlessly. It is possible that the Moabites had ravaged Gilead during Eshbaal's reign over the eastern districts of Israel. Probably the exploit of Benaiah related in xxiii. 20 occurred in this war.

Measured them, etc. I.e. the surviving inhabitants that were captured were lined up in ranks of equal length, two ranks out of every three being slaughtered. In I. *Chron.* xviii. 2, presumably out of consideration for David's reputation, no reference is made to this barbarity. As compared with earlier practices, however, the bloodthirstiness displayed showed a slight advance in the direction of lenience towards a conquered population, which was often massacred wholesale both by Israel and by other peoples, with accompaniments of great savagery (see *Josh.* vi. 21, I. *Sam.* xxvii. 9, I. *Kings* xi. 15, II. *Kings* viii. 12, *Amos* i. 3, 13, and the inscription of Mesha (p. 69).

Brought presents. I.e. tribute (cp. *Judges* iii. 15, I. *Kings* iv. 21). Moab does not seem to have regained its independence until the reign of Ahab (see Mesha's inscription, p. 68).

3. *Hadadezer.* The name is "theophoric," i.e. includes in it the

¹ For the phrase *daughters* cp. *Judges* i. 27 mg.

¹ Another reading is, the river Euphrates.

² Heb. *Aram*.

- Zobah, as he went to recover his dominion at ¹the River. And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots. And when ²the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer king of Zobah, David smote of ²the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in ²Syria of Damascus: and

appellation of a god, viz., *Hadad*, who was a Syrian deity. Syrian personal names were thus similar to Hebrew personal names, and *Hadadezer*, "Hadad is help," has its parallel in *Eliezer*, "God is help," and *Joezer*, "Jehovah is help." The LXX. and I. Chron. xviii. 3 have *Hadarezer*, due to γ being mistaken for ρ.

Zobah. See p. 38. Saul is stated in I. xiv. 47 to have had hostilities with its kings.

To recover . . . River. On the mg. see p. 5. It is more likely that Hadadezer's expedition was not to recover, but to extend, his dominions, for I. Chron. xviii. 3 has to *establish his dominion by the river Euphrates* (cp. LXX. ἐπιστῆσαι τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ), and of this the expression here used (which is rather unnatural, being literally "to turn his hand"), may easily be a corruption (ψ being substituted for ρ). David took advantage of Hadadezer's absence in the distant east to invade his territory. The Euphrates is constantly called in Heb. "the River," *par excellence* (see x. 16, Gen. xxxi. 21).

4. *A thousand and seven hundred*. Both LXX.B. and the Chronicler (who frequently magnifies the figures given in *Sam.* and *Kings*) have *a thousand chariots and seven thousand horsemen* (I. Chron. xviii. 4).

Houghed. I.e. hamstrung. The noun *hock* was formerly spelt *hough* (retained in II. Esd. xv. 36 R.V.)

For a hundred chariots. Better, *a hundred chariot horses*. The surface of Judæa was too uneven to make it worth while to keep a large force of chariot horses (cp. p. 54).

5. *Damascus*. See p. 38. It is a place of great antiquity and of famous history, and has been described as "once (i.e. in the seventh century A.D.) capital of the world from the Atlantic to the bay of Bengal." It has still a population of 150,000. The two rivers of Damascus, the Abana (Amana) and Pharpar are usually identified with the modern *Barâda* and *Awaj*; but some authorities consider that they are really represented by the artificial canals *Abanias* and *Taura*, which are drawn off from the Barâda (see *Expositor*, Oct. 1896). For the subsequent relations between Damascus and Israel see I. *Kings* xi. 23-25, xv. 18 f., xx. 1 f., xxii.; II. *Kings* vi. 24-vii. 20, viii. 28, 29, x. 32, 33, xii. 17, 18, xiii. 3-7, 25, xiv. 28, xvi. 5-9.

6. *Garrisons*. Though the word thus translated has this meaning, it possibly here signifies *officers* (as in I. *Kings* iv. 19), i.e. political agents designed to watch over Israelite interests. In any case the hold which Israel acquired over Damascus cannot have been very secure, since, in Solomon's reign, Rezon, an adventurer from Zobah, captured the place and established himself as king (I. *Kings* xi. 23-25).

the Syrians became servants to David, and brought presents. And the LORD ¹gave victory to David
 7 whithersoever he went. And David took the
 shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer,
 8 and brought them to Jerusalem. And from ²Betah
 and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David
 9 took exceeding much brass. And when Toi king
 of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the
 10 host of Hadadezer, then Toi sent ³Joram his son
 unto king David, to ⁴salute him, and to bless him,
 because he had fought against Hadadezer and
 smitten him: for Hadadezer ⁵had wars with Toi.
 And ⁶Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and
 11 vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: these also did
 king David dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver
 and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which
 12 he subdued; ⁷of Syria, and of Moab, and of the

¹ Or, *saved David.*

² In I. Chr. xviii. 8, *Tibhath.*

³ In I. Chr. xviii. 10, *Hadoram.*

⁴ Heb. *ask him of his welfare.*

⁵ Heb. *was a man of wars.*

⁶ Heb. *in his hand were.*

⁷ Heb. *Aram.*

According to some ancient authorities, *Edom*, as in I. Chr. xviii.

11, 12, Ps. lx. title.

7. *Shields of gold.* The rendering is doubtful. The LXX. gives *armlets*; Aq. varies between *collars* and *panoplies*; and Sym. has *quivers*. The LXX. inserts a reference to their subsequent history, as related in I. Kings xiv. 26, *And Shishak, king of Egypt, took them when he went up to Jerusalem in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon.*

8. *Betah . . . Berothai.* These places, the names of which are given in I. Chron. xviii. 8 as *Tibhath* and *Cun*, are of unknown situation. Berothai appears as *Berothah* in Ezek. xlvii. 16, and Betah seemingly as *Tebah* in Gen. xxii. 24.

Brass. Brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc, is rarely found among the remains of ancient cities (DB. i. 314), so that the word here used probably means *bronze* (an alloy of copper and tin), which was known at a very early period (the age of bronze implements coming after the stone age and preceding the age of iron). But the word may also denote copper unalloyed (see *Deut.* viii. 9). Both the LXX. and I. Chron. xviii. 9 add the historical note that Solomon made of the material captured the metal "sea" and lavers for the Temple.

9. *Toi.* Called by the LXX. of I. Chron. xviii. 9, *Toû*, "which is the more probable form philologically" (Driver): cp. the similar ending of *Gashmu* (*Neh.* vi. 6). ¹ and ² are easily confused.

Hamath. A city on the Orontes, called in Greek times *Epiphaneia* after Antiochus Epiphanes, though it afterwards resumed its former designation. It was possibly by origin a Hittite city.

10. *Joram.* In I. Chron. xviii. 10 the name is given as *Hadoram*, which may be a corruption of *Hadadram* (cp. *Adoram* for *Adoniram*), meaning Hadad is high (or "exalted"). This is a much more likely name for a Syrian than *Joram* ("Jehovah is high").

12. *Syria.* The LXX. and I. Chron. xviii. 11 have *Edom*; but this anticipates what is related in vv. 13, 14, and the Heb. text (confirmed by the Vulg.) is probably correct. The variant is due to a confusion of ¹ with ².

¹Heb. *Aram*.
According to
some ancient
authorities,
Edom, as in
I. Chr. xviii.
11, 12,
Ps. lx. title.
²Or, *saved*
David.

children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of ¹the Syrians in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen thousand men. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD ²gave victory to David whithersoever he went.

vv. 15-18. *A List of David's State Officials.*

This list of David's officers of state is virtually repeated in xx. 23-26, where the order is a little more systematic, the arrangement being (a) military, (b) civil, (c) religious.

³Or,
chronicler.

15 **A**ND David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgement and justice unto all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was ³recorder: and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests; and

Of Amalek. There is no further mention of any Amalekite war; the reference can scarcely be to David's reprisals for the Amalekite raid in I. xxx. 14.

13. *The Syrians.* The Heb. text (which is supported, as in v. 12, by the Vulg.) cannot here be correct, since *the valley of Salt* was in Edom (I. Chron. xviii. 12, and cp. II. Kings xiv. 7, Ps. lx. title), and the next v. requires some previous mention of the defeat of the Edomites. It would be easy to replace *the Syrians* by *the Edomites* on the assumption that γ has been mistaken for ρ. But the LXX. has, *And David gat him a name. And when he returned* (i.e. from some other campaign), *he smote the Edomites*: so that probably the Heb. and the Greek have each a portion of the true text, which then will be: *And David gat him a name. And when he returned from smiting the Syrians, he smote the Edomites in the valley of Salt, even 1,800 men.* In I. Chron. xviii. 12 the success over Edom is ascribed to Abishai, and in I. Kings xi. 16 to Joab, who is said to have stayed half a year in Edom until he had exterminated all the male population.

The valley of Salt. Identified with the *Wâdy el Milk*, on the frontier between Judah and Edom.

15. *Executed judgment.* It was the function of the king, as far as possible, to administer justice in person; see xv. 4.

16. *Recorder.* Better, *Remembrancer*; cp. Aq. ὁ ἀναμνησκων. But the LXX. has τῶν ὑπομνημάτων, and the Vulg. a commentarius. See p. 56.

17. *Zadok, the son of Ahitub*, etc. According to I. xxii. 11, 20, Ahitub was the father of Ahimelech and grandfather of Abiathar, so that there seems to be some disorder in the present passage, which should probably run, *Abiathar the son of Ahimelech* (perhaps the same as *Ahijah*, I. xiv. 3), *the son of Ahitub, and Zadok were priests.* This correction agrees with

18 Seraiah was ¹scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada ²*was over* the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were ³priests.

¹ Or, *secretary*.
² So in ch. xx. 23, and I. Chr. xviii. 17. The Hebrew text has, and the *Cherethites* &c.
³ Or, *chief ministers*.

CHAPTERS IX.-XX.

Unlike the preceding eight chapters, which are concerned mainly with David's relations with neighbouring kingdoms, the twelve that begin here are occupied with incidents

the implication in I. ii. 31-36, I. *Kings* ii. 27 that Abiathar was a descendant of Eli and that Zadok was not, for Ahitub was the grandson of Eli (I. xiv. 3). Abiathar was descended from Aaron's son Ithamar, whereas Zadok was descended from Eleazar (I. *Chron.* xxiv. 3, 6). Abiathar was priest during Saul's reign and accompanied David when a fugitive (I. xxii. 20), and both he and Zadok acted as priests at the time of Absalom's rebellion (xv. 35). Towards the close of David's life Abiathar supported the party of Adonijah, and Zadok that of Solomon; so when Solomon came to the throne, he deposed Abiathar and promoted Zadok to his position. As the descendants of Zadok ministered in the temple at Jerusalem, their importance was enhanced as soon as the provincial sanctuaries were declared unlawful by the legislation of *Deut.*; and by Ezekiel the priesthood was reserved to them exclusively (xliv. 10-16).

Seraiah. The name of David's scribe (or *Secretary*) appears in the LXX. as *'Ara*, in xx. 25 as *Sheva*, and in I. *Chron.* xviii. 16 as *Shavsha* (or perhaps *Shusha*). It is not unlikely that the same person is designated by all the four, though his real name is uncertain.

18. *Was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites*. Instead of *was over*, the Heb. has merely *and* (see mg.); but *over* occurs in the Vulg. and I. *Chron.* xviii. 17. The troops here mentioned were a band of foreign mercenaries, forming the king's bodyguard (just as Swiss soldiers constitute the guards of the Pope). The name of the *Cherethites* (Heb. *Cerethi*) suggests that they came from Crete, which is thought to be identical with *Caphtor*, the original home of the Philistines (*Amos* ix. 7).¹ They certainly lived in the vicinity of Philistia, since they dwelt in the South (the *Negeb*, I. xxx. 14), and are mentioned with the Philistines in *Ezek.* xxv. 16, *Zeph.* ii. 5. The name *Pelethites* (Heb. *Pelithi*) resembles *Philistines* (Heb. *Pelishitim*), and though the etymological connection is said to be not in accordance with philological analogy (Driver), the probability is that they were of Philistine origin. The name may have been assimilated to *Cerethi*. Mention is made of Gittites in David's service in xv. 18.

Priests. As contrasted with Zadok and Abiathar, David's sons were perhaps court-chaplains. Since they, like their father, belonged to the tribe of Judah, not Levi, the present passage shows that at this time the priesthood was not restricted to the latter tribe (see also on xx. 26). Aq. has *ιερείς* and the Vulg. *sacerdotes*, but the LXX. has *αὐλάρχαι* and I. *Chron.* xviii. 17 has *chief about the king*. These two latter renderings (which have suggested the R.V. mg.) are probably given in accordance with the presumption of later times that none but descendants of Aaron

¹ In *Gen.* x. 14 the Philistines are connected with the *Casluhim*, but it is generally supposed that in this *v.* *Casluhim* and *Caphtorim* have accidentally changed places.

connected with David's family life, which had, indeed, serious consequences outside the limits of the royal court, but which nevertheless had their origin within the circle of the king's own household. The narrative is characterized by considerable detail, and is written with remarkable vigour and vividness. Whether it ever existed as an independent document cannot be determined, but as an historical authority, it has every claim to be included in *A*, the most valuable of the sources from which II. Sam. is derived (p. 16 f.).

CHAPTER IX.

DAVID AND MERIBAAL (MEPHIBOSHETH).

The abrupt way in which the story related in this chapter opens suggests that the present connection is not original. The almost entire extermination of Saul's descendants is taken for granted (*vv.* 1, 3), and David is represented as ignorant of the existence of Mephibosheth (Meribaal). It has been proposed to regard the chapter as a sequel to *xxi.* 1-14; but the statement in *xxi.* 7 that David, whilst surrendering seven of Saul's descendants to the Gibeonites' desire for vengeance, spared Mephibosheth for his father's sake, is against this arrangement; and by the supporters of it *v.* 7 has to be omitted from *ch.* *xxi.* For the date of the incident see on *v.* 12.

- 1 **A**ND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him
- 2 kindness for Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said,
- 3 Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, 'Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on

¹ See *ch.* *iv.* 4.

could ever have been priests, and that David's sons must therefore have held some civil office. But Driver points out that there is no trace of the Heb. word having connoted any merely secular office, and that it has in Phœnician and Aramaic the same meaning as in Heb., where its sense is uniformly that of "priest." According to the same authority, it means in Arabic "a soothsayer"; and it will be remembered that it was one of the functions of the Hebrew priest to give oracular responses to those who inquired of Jehovah (*I.* *xxiii.* 6-13).

1. *For Jonathan's sake.* The claims of affection had been fortified by a specific promise on the part of David to show kindness to Jonathan's offspring (*I.* *xx.* 15, 16).

3. *The kindness of God.* A parallel phrase occurs in connection with the covenant between David and Jonathan in *I.* *xx.* 14. It seems to mean such kindness as God requires and approves.

Lame on his feet. For the accident that made him a cripple see *iv.* 4.

4 his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he ?
 And Ziba said unto the king, Behold he is in the
 5 house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then
 king David sent, and fetched him out of the house
 of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.
 6 And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of
 Saul, came unto David, and fell on his face, and did
 obeisance: And David said, Mephibosheth. And
 7 he answered, Behold thy servant ! And David said
 unto him, Fear not : for I will surely shew thee
 kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will
 restore thee all the ¹land of Saul thy father ; and
 8 thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And
 he did obeisance, and said, What is thy servant,
 that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog
 9 as I am ? Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's
 servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to
 Saul and to all his house have I given unto thy
 10 master's son. And thou shalt till the land for him,
 thou, and thy sons, and thy servants ; and thou
 shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may

¹ Heb. *field*.

4. *Machir*. Mentioned again in xvii. 27. He was possibly a Manassite (*Num.* xxvi. 29).

Lo-debar. A place on the E. of Jordan (xvii. 27), perhaps the same as the *Lidebir* of *Joshua* xiii. 26 mg.

6. *Mephibosheth*. His real name was probably Meribaal (see p. 102 f.), which is given here and in xxi. 7 by LXX. *Luc.* and the O.L. (in the form of *Memphibaal*).

7. *Fear not*. The fears of Meribaal were not unnatural, since it was a common practice in the East for usurpers to exterminate the family of their predecessors (see I. *Kings* xv. 29, xvi. 11).

I will restore, etc. Saul's private estate seems, like his wives, to have passed to the reigning monarch on his accession to the throne.

Saul thy father. Strictly Saul was his grandfather ; and the LXX. has *Saul the father of thy father*. So Jehu is called *the son of Nimshi* (who was really his grandfather, his father being Jehoshaphat, see II. *Kings* ix. 14).

Thou shalt . . . table. For this mark of honour cp. I. *Kings* ii. 7, II. *Kings* xxv. 29. Kirkpatrick adduces the parallel instances of Democedes the physician of Darius, who was made ὁμοτράπεζος βασιλεῖ, and of Histiaëus whom the same king wished to be his σύσσιτος καὶ σύμβουλος. (*Hdt.* iii. 132, v. 24). The table commonly in use in the East was "a small low stand, around which those who partook of the meal sat on the ground, or which was placed before them as they sat upon chairs or couches" (Moore, *Jud.*, p. 18). Probably the latter arrangement would prevail at a royal court (cp. *Ezek.* xxiii. 41).

10. *That thy master's son*, etc. As Meribaal (Mephibosheth) was to eat at David's table, *son* is probably an accidental error for *house* :

¹ Or, *But Mephibosheth eateth &c.*

- have bread to eat ; but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba
 11 had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do.
¹As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at
 12 my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto
 13 Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem : for he did eat continually at the king's table ; and he was lame on both his feet.

CHAPTER X.

THE AMMONITE WAR.

This chapter is exclusively concerned with the details of one of David's wars (briefly mentioned in viii. 12) and therefore might be expected to appear in the first subdivision of the book. But its position here is explained by the fact that it furnished the opportunity for David's murder of Uriah. The war against Ammon probably followed that against Moab.

vv. 1-5. *The occasion of the war.*

² See I. Chr. xix.

- 1 ² **A**ND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his
 2 son reigned in his stead. And David said,

LXX. *Luc.* has *that thy master's house may have bread to eat*. Though Meribaal was himself to be a member of the royal court, he also had an establishment of his own (cp. v. 13 and xvi. 3), which needed to be supported.

Now Ziba had, etc. The statement is designed to show that Ziba was in a position to undertake the cultivation of his master's estate.

11. *As for . . . king's sons*. The present Heb. text, by putting these words into the king's mouth, makes him repeat his own declaration in the last half of v. 10. Instead of *this* the LXX. has *And Mephibosheth ate at the table of David, as one of the king's sons* (the statement being a remark of the historian's), which is doubtless the correct text. It seems gratuitous to suppose (with Kittel, *Hist. Heb.* ii. 167) that David, in his treatment of Meribaal (Mephibosheth), was in fact actuated by the desire to keep him under surveillance at Jerusalem.

12. *Mica*. In iv. 4 Meribaal (Mephibosheth) is said to have been only five years old at his father's death, so that his having offspring by this time throws the incident here related into at least the second decade of David's reign. For his descendants see I. *Chron.* viii. 35 f.

1. *The king*. I.e. Nahash, whose name is supplied in I. *Chron.* xix. 1. His attack on Jabesh-gilead afforded Saul his first opportunity of winning military distinction (I. xi. 1).

Hanun. The same name as the Carthaginian *Hanno*.

2 I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came
3 into the land of the children of Ammon. But the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to
4 overthrow it? So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their
5 buttocks, and sent them away. When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

2. *Shewed kindness*, etc. There is no mention elsewhere of this. It may have occurred during David's outlawry, when David received kind service at the hand of Ammon's neighbour Moab (I. xxii. 3, 4).

3. *Thinkest thou*, etc. Hanun's councillors may have been led to suspect David's good faith in consequence of his attack upon Moab related in viii. 2.

The city. I.e., Rabbah (xi. 1).

4. *Shaved off*, etc. The insult was a cumulative one. To lay hands upon ambassadors was to outrage persons who should have been inviolable; to injure the beard was to harm what by Hebrews and other orientals was cherished as a sign of manhood and dignity; and the injury inflicted in this instance rendered the ambassadors ridiculous (though the LXX. omits the words *the one half of*: cp. I. Chron. xix. 4). There seems reason to think that in antiquity a special degree of sanctity attached to the hair of the chin, as to that of the head. Amongst the Greeks appeal was made to the beard by suppliants (Eur. *Supp.* 277, *πρὸς σε γενειάδος . . . ἀντρομαί*), the explanation being found in the circumstance that the hair grows faster than any other part of the human frame, and so seems to manifest most clearly the presence of some supernatural power. This belief that the hair was in a peculiar measure the seat of Divine life explains why it was so often offered both by the Hellenic and by the Semitic races to divinities, it serving as an appropriate link to unite the worshippers and the worshipped.

Cut off, etc. Shorn garments were the outward signs of captives (Is. xx. 4).

5. *Jericho*. There were fords near Jericho (*Josh.* ii. 7), and it was doubtless by them that the ambassadors crossed the Jordan on both the outward and homeward journey. The city is 7 m. from the Dead Sea.

vv. 6-14. *The defeat of the Ammonites and their Syrian allies.*

6 **A**ND when the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zobah, and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves in the field. Now when Joab saw that ¹the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians: and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of ²Abishai his brother, and he put them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee,

¹ Heb. *the face of the battle was against.*

² Heb. *Abshai.*

6. *Hired.* In I. Chron. xix. 6 it is stated that the sum expended was 1,000 talents of silver (£410,000), and that the forces hired included 3,200 chariots—an incredible number.

Beth-rehob. See p. 38. It is mentioned as being near Dan (*Judges* xviii. 27-29).

Zobah. See on viii. 3.

Maacah. See p. 38. The Maacathites are mentioned in *Deut.* iii. 14, *Josh.* xiii. 11.

Tob. Named in *Judges* xi. 3, but its position is uncertain. G. A. Smith identifies it with *Taiyibeh*, a locality in Gilead.

7. *All the host of the mighty men.* Literally, *the host, the mighty men.* The temporary levies, constituting *the host*, and *the mighty men* were distinct, the latter being probably the trained troops that then formed the standing army, and the former the militia mobilized for particular campaigns. Hence it has been proposed (though without the support of the versions) to read here *all the host and the mighty men.*

8. *Were . . . in the field.* The mercenaries were thus posted with the object of taking the Israelites in the rear, whilst they had, in case of need, a line of retreat open northward to their own territories. In I. Chron. xix. 7 they are strangely described as having concentrated at Medeba, a place which was a considerable distance to the south of Rabbah.

9. *Now when Joab, etc.* Joab, being between two fires, decided to attack the Syrians with his most dependable troops, leaving his brother to engage the Ammonites.

10. *Abishai.* The Heb. has *Abshai*, as in I. Chron. xviii. 12, xix. 11.

- 12 then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God : and the LORD do that which
 13 seemeth him good. So Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh unto the battle against
 14 the Syrians : and they fled before him. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

vv. 15-19. A second defeat of the Syrians.

It is difficult to think that this second campaign against the Syrians, in which *David* took a personal part, followed immediately in historical order upon what is related in the preceding context, for the proper sequel to *v. 14* is clearly *xi. 1*. The fact that nothing is here said about any simultaneous activity on the part of the Ammonites suggests that the campaign here described occurred after the complete defeat of the Ammonites recorded in *xii. 26-31*, Hadadezer the Syrian king then resuming the war with the help of dependent kings from beyond the Euphrates (*v. 19*, cp. *viii. 3*).

- 15 **A**ND when the Syrians saw that they were put to
 16 the worse before Israel, they gathered themselves together. And ¹Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the River : and they came to Helam, with Shobach the captain
 17 of the host of Hadarezer at their head. And it was told David ; and he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David,

¹ In ch.
viii. 3,
Hadadezer.

12. *The cities of our God.* Since the war was one of offence rather than of defence, this phrase, though supported by the LXX., has been suspected to be an error for *the Ark of our God*. That the Ark was with the army at this time appears from *xi. 11*.

14. *Then Joab returned*, etc. That Joab, in spite of his success, did not at once proceed to attack Rabbah suggests that the season was too far advanced for siege operations.

16. *Hadarezer.* Clearly the same as the *Hadadezer*, king of Zobah, who is mentioned in *viii. 3, 5*. The latter form of the name should be substituted here, and in *vv. 16, 19*.

16. *Helam.* The situation of the place is unknown, though some have identified it with Haleb (the modern Aleppo).

18 and fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians *the men of* seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, 19 that he died there. And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIEGE OF RABBAH, DAVID'S ADULTERY, AND THE DEATH OF URIAH.

The narrative of the siege of the Ammonite capital (x. 14) is interrupted by the account of David's misconduct with Bathsheba, for which the absence of her husband on the campaign furnished the opportunity. It is as explaining the circumstances which facilitated the commission of the crime that the siege is described in this part of the book instead of in the earlier half.

v. 1-6. *David's intrigue with Bathsheba.*

¹ See I. Chr. xx. 1.

1 ¹ **A**ND it came to pass, at the return of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of

18. *Seven hundred.* The Chronicler, characteristically exaggerating the number, gives *seven thousand* (I. Chron. xix. 18).

Forty thousand horsemen. The number is so huge (as compared, for instance, with viii. 4) that probably *horsemen* is a scribal error for *footmen*, which is the reading of I. Chron. xix. 18.

1. *At the return of the year.* I.e. in the spring. The expression probably has regard to the beginning of the warm season rather than to the actual commencement of the calendar year, which in early times was considered to occur in the autumn (the first month then corresponding to our Sept.-Oct., but in later times coinciding with our March-April).

When kings go out, etc. Cp. I. Kings xx. 22, 26. This is the reading of the Heb. mg. and of the LXX. and Vulg. But the Heb. text has *when the messengers* (i.e. of David, x. 2) *went forth*, the time meant being just a year after the despatch of the embassy to Hanun. The difference turns on the absence or presence of a single letter; and since the words *to battle* are absent in the original, the reading of the Heb. text is probably correct. In any case the time would be the spring season, when the winter rains were over, and both travelling and the transport of troops became once more possible.

The children of Ammon. I. Chron. xx. 1 has *the country of the children*

- Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried
 2 at Jerusalem. And it came to pass at eventide,
 that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon
 the roof of the king's house: and from the roof
 he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very
 3 beautiful to look upon. And David sent and
 inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not
 this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of
 4 Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers,
 and took her; and she came in unto him, and he
 lay with her; (for she was purified from her un-
 5 cleanness;) and she returned unto her house. And
 the woman conceived; and she sent and told David,
 6 and said, I am with child. And David sent to
 Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And
 7 Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was
 come unto him, David asked of him how Joab did,
 and how the people fared, and how the war prospered.

of Ammon, which is preferable, the territory of Ammon being ravaged prior to the investment of the city.

Rabbah. Now called *Ammân*, 20 miles E. of the Jordan, on an affluent of the Jabbok. In the Greek period from the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 B.C.) it was known as Philadelphia.

2. *Off his bed.* I.e. at the conclusion of his afternoon siesta (cp. iv. 5).

Walked upon the roof. The roofs of Eastern houses being flat, they could be used for various purposes. Thus upon them altars were reared (II. Kings xxiii. 12, Jer. xix. 13, xxxii. 29, Zeph. i. 5), prayer was offered (Acts x. 9), pavilions and booths could be erected (xvi. 22, Neh. viii. 16), and beds spread for sleeping (I. ix. 26 mg.); and it was so customary for the inmates of the house to walk upon them (Daniel iv. 29 mg.) that it was expressly enjoined in the Law that a battlement should be constructed round the edge to prevent accidents (Deut. xxii. 8). Travellers in the East relate that the same habits still prevail.

Bathing. This was for ritual reasons, see v. 4, and cp. Lev. xv. 19.

3. *Bathsheba.* In I. Chron. iii. 5 her name is *Bathshua* (perhaps pronounced *Bathsheva*).

Eliam. Apparently the son of David's counsellor Ahithophel (cp. xxiii. 34). In I. Chron. iii. 5 he is called *Ammiel* (compounded of the same elements differently arranged).

Uriah. Mentioned along with Eliam as a member of the Order of the "Thirty" (xxiii. 39). He was apparently a naturalized foreigner, who had embraced the Hebrew religion (for his name means "My light is Jehovah"), and had married a Hebrew wife.

4. *For she was purified.* Strictly, and she was purifying herself (see v. 2), the clause describing the conditions under which she attracted the king's notice.

vv. 8-13. *David's attempts to conceal his sin.*

- 8 **A**ND David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him
- 9 a ¹mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of
- 10 his lord, and went not down to his house. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Art thou not come from a journey? wherefore didst thou not go
- 11 down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul
- 12 liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem ²that

¹ Or, *present from.*

² Or, *that day. And on the morrow David called him, and he &c.*

8. *Go down.* Uriah's house was perhaps on the slope leading down to the Tyropæon (p. 109) and so was overlooked by the royal palace on the higher ground (v. 2).

Wash thy feet. This ablution was the more necessary in consequence of the loose foot-gear worn in the East: cp. *Gen.* xviii. 4, xliii. 24.

A mess of meat. A special mark of favour (cp. *Gen.* xliii. 34). Similarly Agamemnon honoured Ajax "with the long back" of an ox (*Hom. Il.* vii. 321).

Slept at the door, etc. Perhaps in the guard-chamber of the palace (*I. Kings* xiv. 28).

11. *The ark.* The symbol of Jehovah's presence had accompanied the army on the campaign (cp. xv. 24, I. iv. 4), for Israel's wars were "wars of Jehovah" (*Num.* xxi. 14). In like manner in the Assyrian inscriptions the god Nergal is represented as going before Shalmaneser on his expeditions.

Israel and Judah. The lines of tribal cleavage had not been completely obliterated by the union of the two sections of the people under one crown.

Shall I then, etc. Uriah's scruples were religious in character, since soldiers on active service were consecrated (*Is.* xiii. 3, *Jer.* xxii. 7, li. 27, 28, *Mic.* iii. 5) and consequently had to refrain from any acts which were forbidden (*taboo*) to consecrated persons.

As thou livest and, etc. The expression is unusual, and is perhaps a copyist's error for the more customary *as Jehovah liveth and as thy soul liveth* (cp. I. xx. 3); but the LXX. omits *As thou livest and*.

12. *And the morrow.* The Heb. has *and on the morrow*, which clearly should begin v. 13 (*And on the morrow David called him, and he did eat* etc.), where LXX. *Luc.* and the Syriac place it.

13 day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

vv. 14-27. *David compasses the death of Bathsheba's husband.*

14 AND it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand
15 of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the ¹hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and
16 die. And it came to pass, when Joab ²kept watch upon the city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he knew that valiant men were.
17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people, even of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite
18 died also. Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; and he charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling all the things concerning the war unto the
20 king, it shall be that, if the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore went ye so nigh unto the city to fight? knew ye not that they would
21 shoot from the wall? who smote Abimelech the son of ³Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the wall, that he died

¹ Heb. strong.

² Or, observed.

³ In Judges vi. 32, Jerubbaal.

13. David's second effort to undermine Uriah's determination is peculiarly repulsive, and is followed by the final infamy of making the unfortunate man the bearer of his own death-warrant. Kirkpatrick compares the story of Bellerophon (Hom. *Il.* vi. 166-170).

17. *And the men of the city*, etc. A sally was purposely provoked (vv. 20, 24) and men were deliberately sacrificed to carry out David's designs.

21. *Who smote . . . at Thebez?* In the LXX. of v. 22 (see note) David is represented quite naturally as using this very illustration of the dangers of approaching too near the wall of a besieged city; but it is less natural that Joab should have anticipated David's words so exactly as here described. It seems probable that the illustration originally stood in v. 22 only, that it was then reproduced by copyists in v. 21 (the LXX. having it in both verses), and was afterwards omitted (to avoid needless repetition) in the Heb. of v. 22.

Jerubbesheth. LXX. *Luc.* retains the original form of the name *Jerubbaal* (Jud. vi. 32), the Heb. affording another instance of a substitution to avoid the name of Baal (see p. 90). For the incident alluded to see *Judges* ix. 50-53.

at Thebez? why went ye so nigh the wall? then shalt thou say, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is
 22 dead also. So the messenger went, and came and
 23 shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of
 24 the gate. And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall: and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is
 25 dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou
 26 him. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her
 27 husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

Thebez. Identified with the modern Tubâs, some 12 miles NNE. of Shechem (Nablûs) on the road to Bethshan.

22. *So the messenger went.* The LXX. here describes David's anger and indignant questions almost as Joab, in *vv.* 19-21, is represented as anticipating them: *And the messenger of Joab went to the king at Jerusalem, and came and related to David all that Joab had related to him, even all the matter of the war. And David was angered against Joab, and said to the messenger, Why went ye so nigh unto the city to fight? Knew ye not that ye would be smitten from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jeroboam (an error for Jerubbaal)? Did not a woman cast upon him a piece of a millstone from the wall and he died in Thebez? Why went ye so near the wall?* This is probably the original place of the passage (see next note).

23. *The men prevailed.* More correctly, *Because the men prevailed*, etc., which shows that the messenger's words are an answer to a question by David which the Hebrew omits, but which the LXX. gives in *v.* 22.

And we were upon them. After their temporary repulse, the Israelites rallied and drove the Ammonites back, and eagerness in the pursuit, which was prolonged up to the very entrance of the city, accounted for the casualties.

24. *Some of the king's servants.* LXX. *Luc.* and the O.L. add *about 18 men.*

25. *Then David said, etc.* After the messenger's explanation, David affects to believe that Joab is disheartened by his losses, and sends him a cheering message to persevere in the enterprise.

CHAPTER XII. (vv. 1-15a).

NATHAN AND DAVID.

The moral indignation which finds expression in Nathan's rebuke of David illustrates the spiritual level to which the Hebrew prophets were now beginning to rise (contrast Deborah's attitude towards Jael's treachery, *Judges* v. 24 f.). As there is no reference in the sequel (vv. 15b-25) to Nathan's communication from Jehovah to David or to his prediction of the death of the child whom Bathsheba bore (see v. 16, where David thinks that the child's life may yet be preserved), some scholars have been led to conclude that the account of the prophet's interview with the king (vv. 1-15a) is of later origin than the rest of the narrative, introduced in order to make perfectly explicit Jehovah's resentment towards David's sin. They suppose that David discovered Jehovah's displeasure by the mere fact of the child's death. Certainly, the story as resumed in v. 15b reads quite smoothly without it. But in vv. 15b-25, taken by themselves, there is really nothing to indicate that David connected the death of the child with his own sin, or recognized that he had displeased Jehovah. Apart from the suspected vv. his offence is not brought home to him at all, as xi. 27 (end) requires that it should be; and so the retention of the vv. in question (with the exception of vv. 10-12, see below) seems necessary.

vv. 1-9. *Nathan's parable.*

- 1 **A**ND the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And
 he came unto him, and said unto him, There
 were two men in one city; the one rich, and
 2 the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many
 3 flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing
 save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and
 nourished up: and it grew up together with him,
 and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel,
 and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom,
 4 and was unto him as a daughter. And there came
 a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take
 of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for
 the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but

1. *There were two men, etc.* LXX. *Luc.* prefixes 'Αναγγεῖλον δὴ μοι τὴν κρίσιν ταύτην. The parable, designed to convict the king out of his own mouth (cp. xiv. 4-22), takes the form of an appeal to him for justice in a case where the weak had been wronged by the strong. For other instances of parables in the O.T. see *Judges* ix. 8 f., II. *Kings* xiv. 9, *Is.* v. 1-6, *Ezek.* xvii. 3 f.

4. *There came a traveller, etc.* The duty of hospitality was recognized by one who, in discharging it, did not heed the duties of honesty and justice.

¹ Heb. *a son of death.*

took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the
 5 man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath
 6 done this is ¹worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because
 7 he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I
 8 delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have
 9 added unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the LORD, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

vv. 10-15a. The wages of sin.

10-12. The first of these *vv.* seems to have in view the violent deaths of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah; and the last two are meant as a prediction of the attempt by Absalom to dethrone his father (see xiii. 28, xviii. 14, I. Kings ii. 24, 25, and xvi. 22 [below]). But the *vv.* are probably an interpolation, for in *v.* 14 it is implied that the retribution inflicted upon David will be confined to the loss of the child borne to him by Bathsheba.

5. *Is worthy to die.* The same phrase in the Heb. occurs in I. xx. 31, xxvi. 16 (see *mg.*).

6. *Fourfold.* This was the legal compensation prescribed in *Ex.* xxii. 1 (cp. *Luke* xix. 8), and the same figure is given by two of the Lucianic codices. The LXX., however, has *sevenfold* (for which cp. *Gen.* iv. 15, *Ps.* lxxix. 12, *Prov.* vi. 31), and it is perhaps rather more likely that in the Heb. (with which the other Greek versions and the Vulg. agree) this has been harmonized with the proportion required by the Law than *vice versa*.

7. *Thou art the man.* The prophet, as soon as the king had committed himself, denounces his sin with due faithfulness.

8. *Thy master's wives.* In accordance with the customary practice, Saul's harem was at the disposal of his successor (cp. xvi. 22, I. Kings ii. 17).

If that had been. Literally, *if that be too little, I will add*, etc. (cp. LXX. καὶ ἐν μικρόν ἔστω, προσθήσω, etc.).

9. *The word of the LORD.* This, if correct, may refer to the seventh commandment of the Decalogue (*Ex.* xx. 14); but LXX. *Luc.* and *Theod.* have simply *the LORD*.

The sword of the children of Ammon. The tautology of this with the

10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart
from thine house ; because thou hast despised me,
and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be
11 thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise
up evil against thee out of thine own house, and
I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give
12 them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy
wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it
secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel,
13 and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan,
I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said
unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin ;
14 thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed
thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of
the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto
15 thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto
his house.

vv. 15b-25. *The death of Bathsheba's child, and David's grief.*

AND the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife
bare unto David, and it was very sick.
16 David therefore besought God for the child ;
and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon
17 the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and
stood beside him, to raise him up from the earth :
but he would not, neither did he eat bread with

preceding part of the *v.* is perhaps due to a desire to emphasize the fact that David's crime was aggravated by the duplicity with which it was accomplished.

13. *I have . . . the LORD.* The brevity of a confession of penitence is no measure of its sincerity.

14. *Thou hast given . . . blaspheme.* So Sym. But the single verb here used, elsewhere means to *despise* (as in I. ii. 17), and since in I. xxv. 22 the words *the enemies of David* have erroneously been substituted for *David* (see mg. there), it has been plausibly conjectured that a similar error has occurred here, so that the passage should run, *thou hast greatly despised Jehovah.*

The child also. The word *also* does not mean that the death of the child is additional to the punishment predicted in vv. 10-12, but corresponds to the *also* in v. 13 (where it would be better rendered by *both*).

16. *Went in.* Presumably to his private chamber. The R.V. misses a graphic touch here ; the original has *used to go in and lie all night, etc., i.e.* during each of the seven days of the child's illness (v. 18).

Lay . . . earth. Some MSS. of the LXX. add *in sackcloth* (implied in v. 20, *changed his apparel*).

17. *The elders of his house.* *I.e.* the chief officers of the royal household.

¹ Or, how then shall we tell him that the child is dead, so that he do himself some harm ?

18 them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spake unto him, and he hearkened not unto our voice : ¹how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ? But when David saw that his servants whispered together, David perceived that the child was dead : and David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel ; and he came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who knoweth whether the LORD will not be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her : and she bare a son, and ²he called his name Solomon. And the LORD

² Another reading is, she called.

18. *Vex himself.* Better, *do some harm* (cp. the LXX. καὶ ποιήσει κακὰ). *I.e.* do something desperate (H. P. Smith).

20. *Washed and anointed*, etc. *I.e.* resumed the ordinary usages of life which were discarded during a period of mourning (see iii. 31, xiv. 2, and cp. Matt. vi. 17).

The house of the LORD. *I.e.* the tent where the Ark was preserved (vi. 17).

21. In this v. the LXX. after *weep* adds *and keep vigil* (ἡγρῶσιν), and after *eat bread* adds *and drink*. This is an instance where the Greek version has superfluously expanded the original.

23. *I shall go to him.* *I.e.* join him in Sheol (cp. Gen. xxxvii. 35), the abode of departed spirits. This was conceived to be a region beneath the earth, where the spirits of the dead, good and bad alike, were gathered. As it was regarded as outside the interest and care of Jehovah (Ps. lxxxviii. 5), the outlook into the future after death was a very blank one ; but the mere fact that the spirit was thought to survive, instead of being annihilated, afforded a basis for a more hopeful belief, when once God's care came to be regarded as universal, extending to Sheol as well as to the upper world.

24. *He called.* This is the reading of the Heb. text : the Heb. mg. and

25 loved him; and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name ¹Jedidiah, for the LORD'S sake.

¹ That is, Beloved of Jah.

vv. 26-41. *The Fall of Rabbah.*

The narrative of the siege operations against Rabbah is here resumed from xi. 1.

26 ²NOW Joab fought against Rabbah of the children
27 of Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, yea, I have taken
28 the city of waters. Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and ³it be called after
29 my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it
30 and took it. And he took the crown of ⁴their king, from off his head; and the weight thereof was a

² See I. Chr. xx. 1-3.

³ Heb. *my name be called upon it*

⁴ Or, *Malcam*. See Zeph. i. 5.

the Syriac have *she called*. Among the Hebrews children were commonly, though not universally, named by the mother, see I. i. 20, *Gen.* iv. 1, 25, xxix. 32, 33, xxx. 18, 20, 21. From the order of Bathsheba's children in I. *Chron.* iii. 5 it may perhaps be inferred that Solomon was the fourth of those that survived infancy, though the present passage seems to represent him as her second child.

25. *Sent by the hand of.* I.e. by the agency of (as in x. 2, II. *Kings* xvii. 13, 23).

Jedidiah. I.e. "Beloved of Jehovah"; Sym. Ἀγαπητός.

For the LORD'S sake. Theod. has *by the word of Jehovah* (a difference of one letter).

26. *The royal city.* The expression contrasts Rabbah (as the capital) with the subject towns (cp. I. xxvii. 5); and the mention of its capture (really accomplished by David, v. 29) is anticipatory. It would be more natural, however, to read *the city of waters* (as in v. 27).

27. *The city of waters.* It has been conjectured that this was a fort near a pool or reservoir, the capture of which reduced the city's ability to resist by depriving it of its water supply.

28. *Lest . . . my name.* Cp. the case of Jebus or Jerusalem (v. 9) which was renamed after its conqueror.

30. *Their king.* Heb. *MaLCaM*. If the text is correct, Hanun must be meant. But there is no proper antecedent to which *their* can refer, though the citizens may perhaps be regarded as implied in the mention of the city; and the same consonants admit of being pointed *MiLCoM* (as in the Vulg. and some MSS. of the LXX. in *Jer.* xlix. i, *Zeph.* i. 5). This was the name of the Ammonite god, and LXX. B here combines it with the present Heb. text—*Μελχολ* (an accidental error) *τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν*

Was a talent of gold. A talent might be "heavy" or "light," and equivalent to 130 lbs. or 65 lbs. Even the lighter of these would be a load under which a royal head might find itself very uneasy, so that the

¹ Or, *to*.
² Or, with a slight change in the Hebrew text, *made them labour at*.
³ Or, *brick-mould*.

talent of gold, and *in it were* precious stones; and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the
31 spoil of the city, exceeding much. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them
¹under saws and ¹under harrows of iron, and ¹under axes of iron, and ²made them pass through the ³brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

weight of the crown decides in favour of replacing the words *their king* by *Milcom*, the name of the idol whose head it decorated. The alteration in the Heb. was perhaps intentional (cp. on p. 90).

Precious stones. The Heb. has the sing., which should be rendered a *precious stone*. It was this which was set on David's head.

31. *Put them under saws*, etc. I. Chron. xx. 3 has more explicitly *cut them with saws*, etc. The mg. here renders *put them to saws*, etc., i.e. employed them with the implements named, the sense intended being that the captives were enslaved and put to manual labour (cp. Joshua's treatment of the Gibeonites, Joshua ix. 27). The LXX. leaves the decision between torture and forced labour doubtful (ἐθηκεν ἐν τῷ πρίονι, etc.), but LXX. Luc. (διέπρισεν ἐν πρίονι) and the Vulg. (*servavit*) favour the former alternative.

Harrows of iron. Literally, *sharp implements of iron*, perhaps *threshing sledges* (cp. Amos i. 3). For the nature of these see on xxiv. 22 (though the word there used is different). The LXX. has (ἐθηκεν) ἐν τριβόλοις τοῖς σιδηροῖς, the Vulg. *circumegit super eos ferrata carpenia*.

Axes of iron. The Vatican MS. of the LXX. omits this, but the Alexandrine has ὑποτομεῖσιν σιδηροῖς, Vulg. (*divisitque*) *cultris*.

Made them pass through the brick-kiln. There is again room for doubt whether torture or forced labour is implied. The Heb. text represented by the last word is unintelligible (see p. 5), and the Heb. mg. is generally adopted. It is, however, of doubtful signification, the most plausible meanings being (1) a *brick-mould* (cp. Nah. iii. 14, mg.); (2) something of the same rectangular shape (like a *quadrangle*, Jer. xliii. 9, mg.) Hence those who refuse to render the word here by *brick-kiln* "have a sound philological basis for their opinion" (Driver); but it is then necessary to suppose (with the mg.) that *made them pass through the brick-kiln* is a scribal error for *made them labour with the brick-mould* (due to the easy confusion of 7 and 7). Though the question must be left open, yet the particularity with which, in the previous clauses, *sharp implements* are mentioned is painfully suggestive. The LXX. has διήγαγεν αὐτοὺς διὰ τοῦ πλινθείου, the Vulg. *traduxit in typo laterum*. For the barbarous treatment of enemies see Amos i. 3, 13. The Assyrian inscriptions record the impalement, ripping up, and flaying of captives.

And David, etc. It may perhaps be inferred from the friendship shown to David at a later period by Shobi, the son of Nahash (xvii. 27), that when David returned to Jerusalem he made Shobi king of Ammon in place of his brother Hanun.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMNON, TAMAR, AND ABSALOM.

The only valuable feature about this revolting story of an idle and dissolute prince and his merited death is the side-light it casts upon the customs of the time. It shows that great simplicity in some respects marked the king's court, for the women of it, even though of royal blood, were accustomed to perform domestic duties; whilst a royal prince regarded a sheep-shearing as a fit occasion for a feast, to which he invited his father and his brothers.

vv. 1-22. *Amnon wrongs Tamar.*

- 1 **A**ND it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to do any thing unto her. But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man. And he said unto him, Why, O son of the king, art thou thus lean ¹from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and feign thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, Let my sister Tamar come, I pray thee, and give me bread to eat, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat at her hand. So Amnon lay down, and feigned himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, Let my sister Tamar come, I pray thee, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's

¹ Heb.
morning by morning.

1. Absalom and Tamar were both children of David by Maacah. Amnon, who was David's firstborn (iii. 2), was the son of Ahinoam, and was therefore only half-brother of Tamar.

2. *Was so vexed.* Better, *was so distressed.*

It seemed hard, etc. I.e. difficult, since Tamar was secluded in the women's apartments.

3. *Shimeah.* Elsewhere called *Shammah* (I. xvi. 9).

Subtil. Better, *shrewd* (literally, *wise*, LXX. σοφός, LXX. Luc. φρόνιμος).

Lean. The LXX. has ἀσθενής.

7. *Sent home.* I.e. from Amnon's house to the royal palace.

¹ Heb.
humble.

- 8 house, and dress him food. So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took dough, and kneaded it, and made
9 cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes. And she took the pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man
10 from him. And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon
11 her brother. And when she had brought them near unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said
12 unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not ¹force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not
13 thou this folly. And I, whither shall I carry my shame? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from
14 thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay
15 with her. Then Amnon hated her with exceeding great hatred; for the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had

8. *In his sight.* Apparently in a room adjoining Amnon's chamber, so that he could see her preparing them.

9. *Poured them out.* After emptying the contents of the baking pan into a dish, she gave the latter to a servant to take to Amnon; and when he refused to touch the cakes, they were brought back to her.

12. *In Israel.* It seems to be implied that a higher standard of morals was to be expected in Israel than amongst the surrounding Canaanites: cp. *Gen.* xxxiv. 7, *Deut.* xxii. 21, *Jer.* xxix. 23; and see p. 67 f.

Folly. Better, *wanton deed*. The term (strictly *conscienceless conduct*) was sometimes specifically used in connection with sexual immorality (*Judges* xix. 23).

13. *Fools.* Better, *wantons* (see on iii. 33).

He will not withhold me. The marriage of half-brothers and sisters, children of the same father but not of the same mother, was sanctioned by Hebrew custom (see *Gen.* xx. 12), though eventually forbidden by the law of *Lev.* xviii. 9; and it prevailed amongst other Semitic peoples, like the Phœnicians and the Arabians (W. R. Smith, *Kinship*, p. 163). The practice is possibly connected with the belief that origin from the same father was a less close tie of relationship than birth from the same mother, and so did not constitute as great a bar to marriage.

15. *Hated her*, etc. Kirkpatrick compares Tac. *Ag.* 42, *proprium humani ingenii est odisse quam læseris*.

- loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be
 16 gone. And she said unto him, ¹Not so, because this
 great wrong in putting me forth is *worse* than the
 other that thou didst unto me. But he would not
 17 hearken unto her. Then he called his servant that
 ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman
 18 out from me, and bolt the door after her. And she
 had ²a garment of divers colours upon her: for with
 such robes were the king's daughters that were
 virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her
 19 out, and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put
 ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers
 colours that was on her; and she laid her hand on
 her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went.
 20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath ³Amnon
 thy brother been with thee? but now hold thy
 peace, my sister: he is thy brother; take not
 this thing to heart. So Tamar remained desolate
 21 in her brother Absalom's house. But when king
 David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

¹ Or, Think
not there is
occasion for
this great
wrong in
putting me
forth, which
is worse &c.

² Or, a long
garment with
sleeves.

³ Heb.
Aminon.

16. *Not so*, etc. The Heb. in this *v.* seems to have undergone some corruption and disorder: probably the true text is preserved in some cursive MSS. of the LXX. *Nay, my brother, for this last wrong in putting me forth is greater than the first which thou didst unto me.* The Old Latin has *Noli, frater, expellere me, quoniam maior erit hæc malitia novissima quam prior.*

18. *A garment of divers colours.* The robe resembled the garment worn by Joseph (*Gen.* xxxviii. 3). The word rendered *of divers colours* only occurs in these two passages, and the versions differ in the sense they give to it: (1) *variegated*, (2) *sleeved* (Sym. *χειρῶνός*), (3) *reaching to the wrist* (LXX. and Aq. *καρπῶνός*), (4) *reaching to the ankles* (LXX. *Luc.* *ἀστραγαλῶνός*, Vulg. *talariis*). It seems most likely (as Josephus explains, *Ant.* vii. 8, § 1) that it describes the robe as reaching to the feet, and having sleeves extending to the wrists (cp. *mg.*) The first half of the *v.* (down to *apparelled*) seems to be an explanatory gloss inserted with a view to *v.* 19.

19. *Put ashes*, etc. The ashes, the rent garment, and the hand placed on the head were customary signs of distress (*Esther* iv. 1, II. *Kings* v. 8, *Jer.* ii. 37).

20. *Amnon.* The Heb. here has *Aminon*; cp. *Abshai* and *Abishai*.

21. *Was very wroth.* The fact that David, in spite of his anger, did not punish Amnon, requires an explanation that has been lost from the Heb. but is preserved by the LXX. and Vulg. which add, *but he grieved not the spirit of Amnon his son because he loved him, because he was his first-born.* The copyist's eye passed accidentally to the next *v.* which in Heb. begins with the same word as the omitted passage.

22 And Absalom spake unto Amnon neither good nor bad : for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

vv. 23-39. Absalom's revenge and flight.

23 **A**ND it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim : and Absalom invited
24 all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers ; let the king, I pray thee, and his
25 servant go with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome unto thee. And he pressed him : how-
26 beit he would not go, but blessed him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why
27 should he go with thee ? But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.
28 And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine ; and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not : have not I commanded you ? be
29 courageous and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat

22. *Neither good nor bad.* Presumably with the design of lulling Amnon's fears.

23. *Baal-hazor.* Generally identified with Tell Asûr, nearly 20 miles N. of Jerusalem.

Ephraim. Thought to be the same as the *Ephron* or *Ephraim* of II. *Chron.* xiii. 19 and mg., and of *John* xi. 54, the *Aphairema* of I. *Macc.* xi. 34, and identified with the modern *Et-Taiyebah*. It is situated 2 miles SE. of Baal-hazor, on the road leading down to Jericho.

Invited, etc. For festivities at the annual sheep-shearing cp. I. xxv. 2 f. 24. The invitation to the king was intended to conceal Absalom's design ; but the request that Amnon, with whom Absalom had had no communication for so long (*vv.* 22, 23), should be present, momentarily roused the king's suspicions.

27. The LXX. and Vulg. add at the close of this v., *And Absalom made a feast like the feast of a king* (cp. I. xxv. 36). As the preceding clause ends in Heb. with the *sons of the king*, the homœoteleuton has perhaps caused a copyist to omit the words accidentally, though it is possible that the sentence has been interpolated in the Greek from I. xxv. 36.

28. Absalom's murder of his brother, besides satisfying his desire to avenge his sister's dishonour, helped to pave the way to his own attempt upon the crown.

29. *Then all the king's sons, etc.* The sudden assault upon Amnon

- 30 him up upon his mule, and fled. And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that the tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.
- 31 Then the king arose, and rent his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by
- 32 with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced
- 33 his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.
- 34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side

led them to imagine that a general massacre of the royal children was intended, and a panic ensued.

His mule. The employment of these animals not only in war (xviii. 9) but also in times of peace was an indication of growing luxury. Previously, the ass had been the customary mount in peace for persons of dignity (*Judges* v. 10, x. 4, xii. 14), the horse being only used for military purposes. The rearing of hybrids was subsequently prohibited by the Law.

30. *Absalom hath slain*, etc. In the general confusion, the facts were distorted.

31. *All his . . . rent.* The LXX. and Vulg. preferably have *all his servants who stood by him rent their clothes*, the difference being due to a confusion between י and י'.

32. *Jonadab.* The shrewd instigator of Amnon's artifice (v. 5) was the first to reach the right conclusion.

By the appointment of Absalom, etc. Literally, *according to the mouth* (as in *Ex.* xvii. 1) of Absalom it hath been arranged. This need not mean that Absalom had from the first avowed his purpose of killing Amnon to some of his companions (like Jonadab). Some scholars, however, take the word rendered *determined* (or *arranged*) to be a noun meaning *a scowl* and translate *on the mouth of Absalom there hath been a scowl*, though a scowl would be more naturally described as upon the face than upon the mouth.

34. *Much people.* I.e. the panic-stricken retinue of the princes. The passage that follows has suffered both corruption and loss in the Heb. The LXX. has a longer text which, though not altogether free from distortion, can easily be amended, and points to an original something like this: *And behold much people were coming by the way of the two Beth-horons, from the flank of the hill, at the descent. And the watchman came*

¹ Heb. *with a very great weeping.*

² Another reading is, *Ammihud.*

35 behind him. And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons are come : as thy servant said,
36 so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept : and the
37 king also and all his servants wept ¹very sore. But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai the son of ²Ammihur, king of Geshur, And *David* mourned for his son
38 every day. So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur,
39 and was there three years. And *the soul of David* longed to go forth unto Absalom : for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

CHAPTER XIV.

vv. 1-24. Joab's device to procure Absalom's recall.

In view of David's yearning for the absent Absalom, which the conclusion of the preceding chapter seems to describe, it appears rather strange that any scheme, such as that related in this chapter, should have been necessary to induce the king to do what he really desired. But it was probably consideration of the effect which further leniency towards offending members of his own family might have upon his reputation for justice that prevented David from yielding to his natural impulses, and made it needful for

and reported to the king, and said, *I see men coming from the way of the two Beth-horons, from the side of the hill.* In the Heb. the copyist's eye has passed from the first occurrence of the word *coming* to the second—so all between has been omitted. The words *behind him* are a corruption (misplaced) of *the two Beth-horons* (LXX. *Luc.* has τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν Ἐωραιμ), places named in *Joshua* xvi. 3, 5, and situated NW. of Jerusalem on the road to Joppa.

37. *Talmai.* Absalom's maternal grandfather (iii. 3).

Ammihur. The Heb. mg., the LXX. and the other versions have *Ammihud* (a confusion of γ and η).

His son. I.e. Amnon (see *v.* 39). The clause *And David mourned*, etc., would be more in place at the end of *v.* 36.

38. *So Absalom fled*, etc. This *v.* in part duplicates and in part supplements the first half of *v.* 37, which may originally have run : *But Absalom fled and went to Geshur, to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur, and was there three years.*

39. *Longed.* Literally *failed* (with longing). As the verb is fem., the insertion of some fem. substantive, such as *spirit* or *soul*, is necessary. The verb occurs with the same signification in *Ps.* lxxxiv. 2, cxliii. 7 : cp. the English *to pine* to do something. But the LXX. has ἐκόπασεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ ἐξελθεῖν πρὸς Ἀβессαλωμ, and the Vulg. *cessavitque rex David persequi Absalom*, seemingly reading the verb as masc.

Joab to furnish him with a colourable excuse for recalling the exile.

¹ **N**OW Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that
² the king's heart was toward Absalom. And
 Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched thence a
 wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign
 thyself to be a mourner, and put on mourning
 apparel, I pray thee, and anoint not thyself with
 oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned
³ for the dead : and go in to the king, and speak on
 this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in
⁴ her mouth. And when the woman of Tekoa spake
 to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and
⁵ did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. And the
 king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she
 answered, Of a truth I am a widow woman, and
⁶ mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had
 two sons, and they two strove together in the field,
 and there was none to part them, but the one smote
⁷ the other, and killed him. And, behold, the whole
 family is risen against thine handmaid, and they
 said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may
 kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew, and
 so destroy the heir also : thus shall they quench

1. *Toward Absalom.* The phrase can also mean *against Absalom* (cp. *Dan.* xi. 28), but though *xiii.* 39, as interpreted by the LXX. and Vulg., has been quoted in support of this, it seems irreconcilable with David's intense love for his son, as shewn in *xviii.* 5, 33.

2. *Tekoa.* A township of Judah situated 6 miles S. of Bethlehem, in an agricultural district, fortified by Rehoboam (*II. Chron.* xi. 6) and notable subsequently as the home of the prophet Amos.

3. *Go in to the king.* I.e. with an appeal for protection.

4. *Spake.* This must be an accidental error for *came*, the reading of many Heb. MSS. and of the LXX. and other versions.

7. *The whole family.* Where society is imperfectly organized and the duty of punishing murder is recognized inadequately by the community, it is left to the kin of a slain man to avenge him, with much miscarriage of justice in consequence. Among the Hebrews, however, an interval for enquiry into the circumstances of the man's death with a view to discriminating between murder and accidental (or at least non-deliberate) homicide, was secured by the enactment that the slayer might flee to the altar of Jehovah and be safe there until it could be shown that he had killed his victim with full intent (*Ex.* xxi. 12-14); whilst in those parts of the Law which date from a later period than this, certain cities were set aside as places of sanctuary (*Deut.* iv. 41-43, *Num.* xxxv. 6-34).

Destroy the heir. If Chileab (*iii.* 3) was dead, as well as Amnon, Absalom would be heir to the throne; and these words were perhaps intended to

my coal which is left, and shall leave to my husband
 neither name nor remainder upon the face of the
 8 earth. And the king said unto the woman, Go to
 thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.
 9 And the woman of Tekoa said unto the king, My
 lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my
 father's house: and the king and his throne be
 10 guiltless. And the king said, Whosoever saith
 aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not
 11 touch thee any more. Then said she, I pray thee,
 let the king remember the LORD thy God, that the
 avenger of blood destroy not any more, lest they
 destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth,
 there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.
 12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray
 thee, speak a word unto my lord the king. And he
 13 said, Say on. And the woman said, Wherefore
 then hast thou devised such a thing against the
 people of God? for in speaking this word the king
 is as one which is guilty, in that the king doth not

suggest to the king, when he learnt the true purport of the woman's story, that some who might fortify his resolution to prohibit the exile's return did so from interested motives.

My coal. The metaphor (drawn from a glowing ember), which is here used to express the continuation of a family, resembles that of *the lamp* employed in *Job* xviii. 6, *I. Kings* xi. 36. In the Bible *coal* means wood fuel; cp. *Ps.* cxx. 4, *Prov.* xxvi. 21. There is no mineral coal in Palestine, though it has been mined near Zidon and in the neighbourhood of Mount Lebanon.

To the close of this *v.* probably *vv.* 15-17 should be transposed (see note there).

8. *I will give charge.* It is apparent from this that the State (represented by the sovereign) was beginning to assert its right to regulate the punishment of homicides instead of allowing it to be executed by the kinsmen of the slain man.

9. *The iniquity,* etc. The woman seems to have feared that the king might, after all, evade his promise on the ground that, by protecting the man-slayer, he might share his guilt.

11. *Let the king remember,* etc. By desiring an oath the woman sought to prevent the king from going back upon his word when the motive of her artifice was detected.

Not one hair, etc. For other illustrations of oriental hyperbole see *v.* 20, and cp. *xvii.* 13, *Esther* v. 3 (*Mark* vi. 23), *Is.* xxx. 17, *Mt.* xvii. 20.

12. *Let thine handmaid,* etc. A favourable reply to the feigned appeal being gained, the woman's real object was disclosed.

13. *Such a thing.* I.e. a crime similar to that meditated by the avengers of blood, which would deprive the people of the heir to the throne.

In speaking . . . guilty. This clause is parenthetical: the woman

- 14 fetch home again his banished one. For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God take away life, but deviseth means, that he that is
- 15 banished be not an outcast from him. Now therefore seeing that I am come to speak this word unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will
- 16 perform the request of his servant. For the king will hear, to deliver his servant out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together
- 17 out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid said, Let, I pray thee, the word of my lord the king be ¹comfortable: for as ²an angel of God, so is my lord the king ³to discern good and bad:
- 18 and the LORD thy God be with thee. Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not

¹ Heb. for rest.

² Or, the.

³ Heb. to hear.

meant that by the decision given in her (alleged) case, the king condemned his own conduct towards Absalom.

14. The implication in this *v.* is that, if the king missed the present opportunity of being reconciled to his erring son, it might never recur.

Neither doth God, etc. There is a lack of clearness in the thought here, since the devising of means to recall an exile is not a natural antithesis to the taking of life, if both are referred to God. A transposition of a single letter improves the sense greatly: *neither will God take away the life of him that deviseth means that he who is banished be not* (in perpetuity) *an outcast from him*. The meaning, then, is that God will not punish David with death if he recalls Absalom.

15-17. These three *vv.* must be misplaced: the woman could have no need to revert to her original petition after she had gained her request, and had even explained that she had spoken a parable. Their true position must be after *v.* 7.

16. *That would destroy*. The Heb. is here defective: the R.V. expresses the sense which is required and which is preserved in the LXX. and Vulg. *τοῦ ζητοῦντος ἐξάραι*.

The inheritance of God. I.e. the land of Israel. Beyond the Israelite frontiers, other gods had their territories and might claim the worship of those who sojourned there: see I. xxvi. 19. The primitive idea that Jehovah's presence and control were local also finds expression in *Gen.* iv. 16, *Jon.* i. 3: contrast *Ps.* cxxxix. 7-10.

17. *Thine handmaid*. The LXX. (preferably), *the woman*.

As an angel of God. I.e. possessed of a supernatural insight into the truth; cp. xix. 27.

18. This *v.* connects with *v.* 14. The purport of the woman's artifice having been revealed, the king was perhaps led to suspect the complicity of Joab from some more direct appeal previously made by him on Absalom's behalf.

¹ Or, *the*.² Another reading is, *thou hast done*.³ Another reading is, *thy*.

- from me, I pray thee, aught that I shall ask thee.
- 19 And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. And the king said, Is the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of
- 20 thine handmaid: to change the face of the matter hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise according to the wisdom of ¹an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.
- 21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, ²I have done this thing; go therefore, bring the young man
- 22 Absalom again. And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and did obeisance, and blessed the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath performed the request of ³his
- 23 servant. So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and
- 24 brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, but let him not see my face. So Absalom turned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

vv. 25-27. Absalom's personal gifts.

This section cannot proceed from the same source as that from which the surrounding narrative is derived, since *v.* 27 is inconsistent with *xviii.* 18. It is doubtless of later origin.

- 25 **N**OW in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head

20. *To change the face of the matter.* I.e. to alter the existing situation as regards the banished Absalom.

21. *I have done.* The best edition of the Heb. text does not recognize the Heb. mg. noted in the R.V., and given in the ordinary editions.

22. *His servant.* The Heb. mg. inappropriately substitutes *thy servant*, seemingly for the sake of consistency with *thy servant* earlier in the *v.*

24. *Let him not see my face.* This probably means no more than that Absalom was excluded from the court (for the phrase cp. *Gen.* xliii. 3), and is not to be understood quite literally. If ancient Jerusalem was in circumference little more than three quarters of a mile (*p.* 110) it would have been difficult for David and his son not to meet in the course of two years (*v.* 28).

25. *For his beauty.* More than one of David's sons inherited their father's good looks (*I.* xvi. 12); see *I. Kings* i. 6.

- 26 there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (now it was at every year's end that he polled it : because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it :) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight.
- 27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar : she was a woman of a fair countenance.

vv. 28-33. *Absalom's restoration to favour.*

- 28 **A**ND Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem ;
- 29 and he saw not the king's face. Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king ; but he would not come to him : and he sent
- 30 again a second time, but he would not come. Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there : go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.
- 31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy
- 32 servants set my field on fire ? And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to

26. *Two hundred shekels.* LXX. *Luc.* has *one hundred shekels.*

After the king's weight. Literally, according to the king's stone, a survival from the period when stones were the only weights (cp. the English stone for 14lbs. or 16lbs). A royal standard of weight (as contrasted with the common standard) seems to mean that of a foreign ruler or overlord ; so that it has been inferred that this passage dates from a time (after the Exile) when Babylonian or Persian weights were familiar to the Jews. It has been estimated by some metrologists (see Hastings, *DB.* iv. 904) that the shekel here meant was equivalent to 130 grains, so that Absalom's hair would weigh $3\frac{3}{4}$ (or nearly 4) lbs.

27. *Three sons.* In xviii. 18 Absalom is represented as without male issue. The LXX. adds here one of its historical notes (cp. viii. 7, 8) to the description of Tamar, that "she became the wife of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and bare him Abijah." The statement contradicts I. *Kings* xv. 2 and II. *Chron.* xiii. 2 : probably Tamar was the grandmother, not the mother, of Abijah (or Abijam).

29. The motive of Joab's attitude towards Absalom is rather enigmatical, but it was perhaps a desire, now that David's love for Absalom had been gratified by his recall, not to help further one whom he knew to be worthless.

30. *Set the field on fire.* The LXX. adds, *And Joab's servants came to him, having rent their clothes, and said, Absalom's servants have set thy field on fire.* The passage has probably been omitted from the Heb. through homœoteleuton (on fire . . . on fire).

say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it were better for me to be there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be iniquity in me, let him kill me. So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

CHAPTERS XV—XVIII.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION AND DEATH.

CHAPTER XV.

vv. 1–6. Absalom's intrigues.

1 **A**ND it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and
2 fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgement, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of
3 Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man
4 deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might

33. *So Joab came, etc.* Joab seems to have been impressed by Absalom's demand to be regarded as either innocent or guilty (*v.* 32).

Bowed himself on his face. The LXX. has *bowed himself and fell on his face*; cp. *v.* 4.

Kissed Absalom. The same token of reconciliation occurs in *Gen.* xxxiii. 4, *xlvi.* 15, *Luke* xv. 20.

1. *Prepared . . . before him.* Horses and bodyguards (literally *runners*) were an outward symbol both of royalty and of the status of the heir apparent, see *I. viii.* 11, *I Kings* i. 5. Absalom, through the death of Amnon, and probably of Chileab, was David's eldest surviving son.

2. *The gate.* Possibly the gate of the palace, though the usual place for dispensing justice (which is here in mind) was the gate of the city (*Deut.* xxi. 19, *Amos* v. 12).

Of what city art thou? The question ostensibly showed personal interest in the litigant, but it really enabled Absalom to ascertain to what neighbourhood the man's influence might reach.

One of the tribes of Israel. A general summary of the particular replies given, equivalent to "of such and such a tribe."

3. Absalom's charge against his father was not that the latter personally neglected his judicial duties (see, on the contrary, *xiv.* 4 f.) but that he had not made provision for dealing with the increasing number of cases that called for hearing.

5 come unto me, and I would do him justice ! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgement : so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

vv. 7-12. *The outbreak of the revolt.*

7 **A**ND it came to pass at the end of ¹forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have
8 vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in ²Syria, saying, If the LORD shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem,
9 then I will ³serve the LORD. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.
10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom is king in

¹ According to some ancient authorities, *four*.

² Heb. *Aram*.

³ Or, *worship*.

5. *And kissed him.* The influence which Absalom sought to obtain by a display of zeal for the public interest he also tried to reinforce by great affability.

6. *Stole the hearts.* This means, not that he won the affections of the people but that he duped them—blinded them to his real motives (cp. *Gen.* xxxi. 20 mg.) By the Hebrews, as by the Romans, the heart was regarded as the seat of the understanding and intelligence (*Jer.* v. 21, mg., *Hosea* vii. 11, *Prov.* vi. 32, and cp. the Latin *bene cordatus, excors, vecors*).

7. *Forty.* This figure, though supported by the LXX. and Vulg., must be a mistake for *four*, which is given by LXX. *Luc.* the Syr., and Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 9, § 1). The interval is reckoned from the time of his restoration to favour.

In Hebron. The Ark, the symbol of Jehovah, was at this period at Jerusalem, but it is clear that the worship of Jehovah was not restricted to any one locality. Hebron was Absalom's birthplace (iii. 3-5); and the ancient religious associations of the town (*Gen.* xiii. 18) would give colour to Absalom's pretext; but his real motive was doubtless to take advantage of the disaffection caused amongst the people of Judah by David's removal of the capital to Jerusalem.

8. *Serve the LORD.* I.e. by offering sacrifice to Him. The sense requires the addition of *in Hebron* (as in v. 7). For a similar vow cp. *Gen.* xxviii. 20-22, xxxv. 1-7.

10. *Spies.* I.e. emissaries, whose mission it was to organize a simultaneous movement in favour of Absalom.

The trumpet. Better, *the horn* (see on ii. 28). For this as a signal of revolt cp. xx. 1, II. *Kings* ix. 13.

¹ Or, sent
Ahithophel.

- 11 Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were invited, and went in their simplicity; and they knew not any thing.
12 And Absalom ¹sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

vv. 13-17. *David's flight from Jerusalem.*

² Or, at the
Far House.

- 13 **A**ND there came a messenger to David, saying,
14 The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite
15 the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall
16 choose. And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which
17 were concubines, to keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the people after him; and they tarried ²in Beth-merhak.

11. *Went in their simplicity.* They were invited to be present at the religious ceremony (v. 7); but their reputation being compromised by the subsequent events, they would have no alternative but to join him.

12. *Sent for A . . . from.* The R.V. conceals a defect in the original, which has *sent A . . . from* (see mg.). Some word has been lost after *sent*, such as *and called*, which is found in some MSS. of the LXX.

Ahithophel. The grandfather of Bathsheba.

Giloh. The modern Jâla, in the hill country of Judah, 6 miles NW. of Hebron.

The sacrifices. Either those implied in v. 8, or those which were offered when Absalom was formally adopted as king (cp. I. xi. 15). Absalom's anointing is referred to in xix. 10.

14. *All his servants.* I.e. the members of his court and household (see v. 16), as contrasted with the forces in the capital which remained loyal to him.

Arise, and let us flee. Although it is true that David was taken off his guard, and his capital probably ill-prepared for resistance, yet his want of spirit suggests that indolence by this time had somewhat enervated his character.

17. *And all the people.* There is probably an error here. The LXX. has *and all his servants*, i.e. the household of v. 16; and the acceptance of this reading helps to make the course of events clearer.

Tarried. Better, *halted*. At Beth-merhak ("the house of distance,"

vv. 18-29. *The loyal remnant.*

- 18 **A**ND all his servants passed on beside him ; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.
 19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us ? return and abide with the king : for thou art a stranger, and also an exile ;
 20 *return* to thine own place. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us, seeing I go whither I may ? return thou, and take back thy brethren ; mercy and
 21 truth be with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the

presumably the last in the eastern environs of Jerusalem, above the Kidron) the king, who had left the city first, halted with his household, to allow the armed forces to pass and precede him.

18. *All his servants.* It is a plausible suggestion that the true reading is *all the people* (i.e. the armed population of the capital), which has accidentally got into v. 17, displacing there *all his servants* (see on v. 17) which has taken its place here. The LXX., which has a double version of the contents of this verse, reads in one of these $\pi\alpha\varsigma \circ \lambda\alpha\acute{o}\varsigma$.

And all the Cherethites, etc. See on viii. 18. These, constituting the royal guards, followed the rest of the forces, and when the whole column had passed the king, the latter, with his immediate attendants, took up his position in the rear of the column.

Which came after him. As the text stands, the pronoun *him* refers to David, and the *six hundred men* must be those mentioned in I. xxvii. 2. But the king's address to Ittai the Gittite in the next v. implies that Ittai must have figured previously in the passage, and it is therefore a reasonable conjecture that instead of *and all the Gittites* should be read *and all the men of Ittai the Gittite* ; so that *him* will refer to Ittai and not to David.

19. *Wherefore, etc.* David's question implies that from Ittai, as a mere soldier of fortune, no personal fidelity, in times of reverse, could be expected.

With the king. I.e. Absalom, the *de facto* monarch.

Return to thine own place. There is no verb in the orig., and the LXX. and Vulg., reading *from* instead of *to*, connects the clause with the preceding (*for thou art a stranger and an exile from thine own place*), probably correctly.

20. *Take back . . . with thee.* The Heb. text must mean *take back thy brethren with thee in mercy and truth*, but probably some words have been lost. The LXX. has *take back thy brethren with thee, and Jehovah do unto* (literally, *with*) *thee mercy and truth*, and this is doubtless the true text : cp. ii. 6. The copyist's eye has passed from the first *with thee* to the second, and he has in consequence omitted the intervening words.

21. Ittai, with rare nobility, protests that if he sold his sword, he did not sell his honour. David was still king for him.

king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there
 22 also will thy servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were
 23 with him. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over : the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.
 24 And, lo, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God ; and they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the
 25 city. And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favour in

22. *All the little ones.* If this is correct cp. *Ex. x. 10.* But the LXX. reads, more naturally, *Ittai and all his servants and all the multitude that was with him.*

23. *All the country.* I.e. the sympathetic country folk who had assembled to watch the king's departure.

The king also . . . over the brook. The narrative goes back to *vv. 17, 18* ; and the situation becomes plainer if for *passed over the brook* there is substituted *and the king halted at (or in) the brook*, assuming a corruption of מ into כ and of ר into ג. The *brook* (or better, *the torrent valley*) of the Kidron was the gorge between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. At or in this gorge David stood whilst all the people crossed it.

Toward the way of the wilderness. The Heb. is untranslatable here, and the true text is preserved in LXX. *Luc.* and the O.L., which have *along the way of the olive tree, which is in the wilderness.* After the passage of the Kidron the column of fugitives proceeded to traverse the barren ground between it and the Jordan, where some olive tree or other marked the direction. "The road taken was probably the one on the S. slope of the Mount of Olives, the same which is still travelled to Jericho and the Jordan valley" (H. P. Smith).

24. *Zadok . . . the Levites.* The narrative here reverts to the exodus from the city. Since both Zadok and Abiathar were in charge of the Ark and are coupled together in *v. 35*, the omission of the latter's name is strange, and it is not improbable that it has been replaced by *all the Levites* : a later scribe who was acquainted with the regulations of the Law may have thought it impossible that its requirements were disregarded on this occasion.

Went up. This is obscure, for it can scarcely mean that he ascended the Mount of Olives (cp. *v. 30*), which was on the other side of the Kidron. The Heb. may also mean *offered sacrifices*, presumably on account of the transport of the Ark from the city (cp. the sacrifices offered by David to Jehovah when the Ark was taken to Jerusalem (vi. 13)) ; and this seems the better rendering.

25. *Into the city.* LXX. *Luc.* adds *and let it abide in its place* : cp.

the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and
 26 shew me both it, and his habitation : but if he say
 thus, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I,
 27 let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. The
 king said also unto Zadok, the priest, ¹Art thou *not*
 a seer ? return into the city in peace, and your two
 sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the
 28 son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry ²at the fords of
 the wilderness, until there come word from you to
 29 certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the
 ark of God again to Jerusalem : and they abode there.

¹ Or, *Seest thou ?*

² Another reading is, *in the plains.*

vv. 30-37. Plot and counterplot.

30 **A**ND David went up by the ascent of the mount
 of Olives, and wept as he went up ; and he had
 his head covered, and went barefoot : and all
 the people that were with him covered every man his
 head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

v. 29 note. In spite of the fact that the association of the Ark with the army had hitherto been regarded as a condition of military success, David decided to restore it to the capital (perhaps in the hope that it would protect it against sack), trusting that God might bless his fortunes apart from the symbol of His presence. His resolution has justly been described as marking a stage in his religious development. The king's decision on this occasion was the first step towards the permanent location of the Ark in Jerusalem.

27. Art thou not a seer ? There is no *not* in the Heb., and though priests might be prophets (like Jeremiah and Ezekiel), there is no other instance of a priest being termed a seer. The Vulg. *O videns* implies *O Seer*, but the LXX. has *See* (*ἵδере*), as in the next *v.*, and LXX. *Luc.* βλέπε σύ.

Return. The text should probably be *return thou and Abiathar*, since the following pronouns are in the plural.

28. The fords of the wilderness. There are two places where the Jordan is fordable near its mouth, 4 and 3 miles respectively from the Dead Sea : cp. *Joshua* ii. 7, *Judges* iii. 28. The Heb. mg., the LXX., and Sym. all have the *plains of the wilderness* (differing only by the transposition of one letter), but the text is confirmed by xvii. 16 compared with *vv.* 21, 22.

From you. The pronoun is plural, referring to both Zadok and Abiathar.

29. They abode. The LXX. has *it* (the Ark) *abode*, which is preferable.

30. The mount of Olives. This rose on the E. of the Kidron, between it and the descent to the Jordan.

Had his head covered. Presumably with his mantle: cp. xix. 4, *Jer.* xiv. 3, *Esther* vi. 12.

Barefoot. This was another token of grief and affliction: *Ezek.* xxiv. 17.

¹ Or, *where he was wont to worship God.*

31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel
32 into foolishness. And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the ascent, ¹where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his
33 head : and David said unto him, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me :
34 but if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king ; -as I have been thy father's servant in time past, so will I now be thy servant : then shalt thou defeat for me the counsel
35 of Ahithophel. And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests ? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok
36 and Abiathar the priests. Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son ; and by them ye
37 shall send unto me every thing that ye shall hear. So Hushai David's friend came into the city ; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

31. *And one told David.* This is the meaning of the LXX : the Heb. gives no sense.

32. *Where God was worshipped.* Literally, *where one* (or *he*, cp. mg.) *used to worship God*, the place being one of the many legitimate sanctuaries prior to the legislation of Deuteronomy. Summits of hills were customary sites of worship not only among the Hebrews (I. ix. 12, I. Kings iii. 2), but also among other peoples (see p. 65). On the Mount of Olives (here alluded to) Solomon eventually built a sanctuary to Chemosh and Molech (I. Kings xi. 7).

The Archite. The LXX. implies the addition, *David's friend* (as in v. 37). The name of the town of which Hushai was a native is conjectured to be Erech, the modern Ain Arik, W. of Bethel. The "border of the Archites" is described as stretching from Bethel to Ataroth (*Joshua* xvi. 2), between the possessions of Ephraim and Benjamin.

Coat. Better, *tunic*, a long sleeved garment reaching from the neck to the ankles, and fastened at the waist by a girdle: LXX. χιτών.

34. David here proceeds to meet craft with craft.

37. *David's friend.* The title was probably not official, but may have been a mark of honour (corresponding to a Civil order in modern courts). Those who were so distinguished doubtless often acted as the king's confidential advisers. The same title (φίλοι) was borne by the nobles at the court of the Seleucidæ, the dynasty that reigned in Syria during the last three centuries B.C.: cp. I. *Macc.* ii. 18, iii. 38, vi. 10.

CHAPTER XVI.

vv. 1-4. *Ziba traduces his master.*

- 1 **A**ND when David was a little past the top of the ascent, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a ¹bottle of wine.
- 2 And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that
- 3 such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of
- 4 Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine is all that pertaineth unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I do obeisance; let me find favour in thy sight, my lord, O king.

¹ Or, *skin*.

vv. 5-14. *Shimei curses David.*

- 5 **A**ND when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei,

1. *Ziba*. See ix. 2 f. The nature of his present to David and his weary followers may be compared with the description of similar presents in I. xxv. 18, *Gen.* xliii. 11.

Summer fruits. Cp. *Amos* viii. 1. In the LXX. they are specified as *dates*, which were probably pressed into cakes (*Vulg. massæ palatharum*) to which the number *a hundred* refers.

A bottle. Bottles were sometimes of skin (*Ps.* cxix. 83, a different word), sometimes of earthenware (*Lam.* iv. 2).

3. *Thy master's son*. By *thy master* is meant Saul (ix. 9), so that *son* stands for *grandson*. The absence of Meribaal (Mephibosheth) roused David's suspicions, which Ziba was eager to foster. The servant's statement about him, in the light of xix. 26, and the improbability that the people would have a cripple for their king, seems to have been a calumny, which David, in his bitterness at other desertions, at once believed.

5. *Bahurim*. See iii. 16. It lay somewhere on the road leading to the fords, which David had not yet crossed (xvii. 22).

Shimei. A Benjamite (v. 11), who, according to the true text of xix. 16-17 (see note), seems to have been a person of much importance among his fellow tribesmen. The description *the son of Gera* means that he belonged to the Benjamite *clan* of that name (see *Gen.* xlv. 21, *Judges* iii. 15).

¹ That is, worthless-ness.

² Or, When he curseth, and when &c. Another reading is, So let him curse, because.

³ Some ancient versions read, my affliction.

the son of Gera : he came out, and cursed still as he
 6 came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the
 servants of king David : and all the people and
 all the mighty men were on his right hand and on
 7 his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed,
 Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and man of
 8 ¹Belial: the LORD hath returned upon thee all the
 blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast
 reigned ; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom
 into the hand of Absalom thy son : and, behold,
 thou art *taken* in thine own mischief, because thou
 9 art a man of blood. Then said Abishai the son
 of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead
 dog curse my lord the king ? let me go over, I pray
 10 thee, and take off his head. And the king said,
 What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah ?
²Because he curseth, and because the LORD hath
 said unto him, Curse David ; who then shall say,
 11 Wherefore hast thou done so ? And David said to
 Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son,
 which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life :
 how much more *may* this Benjamite now *do it* ?
 let him alone, and let him curse ; for the LORD hath
 12 bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on
³the wrong done unto me, and that the LORD will
 requite me good for *his* cursing of me this day.

7. *Man of Belial*. Literally, *man of worthlessness*, the abstract noun being used idiomatically (in the gen.) in place of an adjective : cp. *balances of deceit* (Amos viii. 5), *kings of clemency* (I. Kings xx. 31), *heresies of destruction* (II. Pet. ii. 1), *hearers of forgetfulness* (Jas. i. 25)

8. *All the blood*, etc. The bloodshed meant may have occurred in the long war between the adherents of David and Eshbaal (iii. 1) ; but it is most probable that the allusion is to the execution of Saul's descendants described in xxi. 1-14.

Behold thou, etc. Better, *Behold thou art in thy calamity*.

9. *Let me go over*. Shimei seems to have hurled his imprecations from a safe distance on some opposite ridge (v. 13). For Abishai's hot-headedness cp. I. xxvi. 8.

10. *Because he curseth*, etc. Better, *If he curseth, and if Jehovah hath said...* The Heb. mg. has *So let him curse if Jehovah*, etc. The king is resigned to the infliction, if it is ordered by God.

12. *On the wrong done unto me*. I.e. (if the Heb. text be retained) on the wrong done by the charge of bloodthirstiness towards the house of Saul. But the LXX. has τῇ ταραχώσῃ μου and the Vulg. *afflictionem meam* (cp. mg.), the only difference being that between *and* and *'*, accompanied by transposition ; and the true reading may be *on my affliction*. David may have comforted himself with the reflection that

- 13 So David and his men went by the way : and Shimei went along on the hill side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones ¹at him, and
 14 cast dust. And the king, and all the people that were with him, came ²weary ; and he refreshed himself there.

¹ Heb. *over against*.

² Or, *to Ayephim*.

vv. 15-19. *Hushai and Absalom.*

- 15 **A**ND Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel
 16 with him. And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, ³God save the king,
 17 God save the king. And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend ? why wentest thou
 18 not with thy friend ? And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay ; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his
 19 will I be, and with him will I abide. And again, whom should I serve ? *should I not serve in the presence of his son ? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.*

³ Heb. *Let the king live*.

if Shimei *had* been prompted by Jehovah to curse him he had exceeded his mandate (cp. *Zech.* i. 15, *Is.* xlvii. 6), so that his victim's misery would entitle him to compensation. The Heb. mg. reads, most strangely, *on my eye*, understood to mean *on my tears*.

13. *Over against him*. Literally, *alongside of him*, i.e. keeping pace with him along a parallel height.

At him. Literally, *alongside of him*, but the word has been accidentally repeated.

14. *Came weary*. The name of a place (required by *there* in the next clause) has been lost. The R.V. mg. takes the word rendered *weary* to be the name of the locality—*Ayephim* ; but the true reading doubtless is given in LXX. *Luc.*, which has *came weary to the Jordan*.

15. *All the people the men of Israel*. Two phrases seem fused here ; LXX. B has *all the men of Israel*, whilst LXX. A has *all the people of Israel*. *All the people* is the general designation of David's supporters (xv. 23, xvii. 16) ; *all the men of Israel*, that of Absalom's adherents (v. 18, xv. 13, xvii. 24). The correct reading is doubtless that of LXX. B, *all the men of Israel*.

18. To Absalom's sneer at Hushai's professed friendship with David Hushai sharply retorts that " a king's friend " is always *the king's* friend, whoever happens, by the grace of God and of the people, to be *de facto* king at the time.

vv. 20–23. *Absalom's final breach with his father.*

20 **T**HEN said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give you
21 counsel what we shall do. And Ahithophel
said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's
concubines, which he hath left to keep the house;
and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy
father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee
22 be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the
top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his
23 father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. And
the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled
in those days, was as if a man inquired at the 'oracle
of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both
with David and with Absalom.

¹ Heb. *word*.

CHAPTER XVII.

vv. 1–14. *The rival counsels of Ahithophel and Hushai.*

There can be little doubt that the policy advocated by Ahithophel was sound. David, deeply depressed by the ingratitude of his son, and attended by troops whom the evacuation of the capital must have dispirited, and who were comparatively few in number and probably badly provided with supplies (see v. 29), was in no condition to fight very successfully; and it might confidently be expected that if the king were slain, his supporters would accept the situation and submit to Absalom. The policy of delay, urged by Hushai, was altogether in David's favour.

1 **M**OREOVER Ahithophel said unto Absalom,
Let me now choose out twelve thousand
men, and I will arise and pursue after David
2 this night: and I will come upon him while he is
weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid:

20. *Give your counsel.* The words are addressed to a body of counsellors; Vulg. *inite consilium*.

21. *And Ahithophel said, etc.* Ahithophel's advice was that Absalom should at once proclaim his acquisition of the throne by publicly taking possession, according to custom (see on iii. 7), of the royal harem. The breach between father and son would then be irreparable, and all his adherents, recognizing that success alone could save them from the consequences of their treason, would do their best to ensure that success.

22. *A tent.* Literally *the tent*, i.e. the nuptial pavilion (*Ps.* xix. 5, *Joel* ii. 16). The canopy which the Jews are accustomed to hold over a newly-wedded pair is said to be a survival of such a pavilion.

23. *Inquired at the oracle of God.* Strictly, *inquired of the word of God*, probably as conveyed through the Urim and Thummim (see pp. 66, 68).

1. *This night.* The occasion was the evening of the day on which David had retired from his capital in the direction of the Jordan.

and all the people that are with him shall flee ;
 3 and I will smite the king only : and I will bring
 back all the people unto thee : the man whom thou
 seekest is as if all returned : so all the people shall
 4 be in peace. And the saying pleased Absalom well,
 5 and all the elders of Israel. Then said Absalom,
 Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear
 6 likewise what he saith. And when Hushai was
 come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying,
 Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner : shall
 7 we do *after* his saying ? if not, speak thou. And
 Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that
 8 Ahithophel hath given this time is not good. Hushai
 said moreover, Thou knowest thy father and his
 men, that they be mighty men, and they be ¹chafed
 in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in
 the field : and thy father is a man of war, and will
 9 not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hid now in

¹ Heb. *bitter*
of soul.

3. *The man whom . . . returned.* This, so far as it is intelligible at all, means that the destruction of David would ensure the return to Absalom of all the people. But the passage as it stands is too obscurely expressed to be sound ; and the LXX. contains words, lost from the Heb., which restore sense to it. The clause should be connected with the preceding and, emended after the LXX., should run, (*I will bring back all the people unto thee*) as a bride returneth to her husband (literally man) : *only the life of one man thou seekest ; so all the people, etc.* A copyist's eye has passed from the first man to the second, the intervening words being omitted ; and some additional corruption has reduced the original text to its present condition.

4. *Pleased Absalom.* Though Ahithophel's proposal involved David's death, Absalom had no filial feeling to be shocked by it.

7. *This time.* I.e. as compared with the occasion related in xvi. 21.

8. *Thou knowest, etc.* Hushai disputes Ahithophel's contention that David would easily fall a victim, if he were at once pursued by a comparatively small force. David and his men were no raw soldiers, and their rage would whet their natural courage.

A bear. The Syrian bear is described as greyish-brown in colour. It is still found in Lebanon and Hermon, and (less commonly) in Bashan and Gilead, the country where David at this time was. It is very rare in W. Palestine, but was more abundant in Biblical times (see I. xvii. 34 f., II. Kings ii. 24). Its fierceness when it is robbed of its young was proverbial (*Prov.* xvii. 12, *Hosea* xiii. 8). LXX. B here shows its tendency to occasional redundant expansion by adding *καὶ ὡς ὁ τραχὺς ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ*.

Will not lodge with the people. I.e. David would not be found with the bulk of his supporters, but would be entrenched in some easily defensible position, so that Ahithophel's hope of surprising the king among a number of dispirited fugitives, who would desert him in a panic (*v.* 2), would be disappointed.

¹ Or, *when he falleth upon them.*

² Or, *that thy presence (Heb. face) go to the battle.*

³ Or, *withdraw himself.*

- 9 some pit, or in some *other* place : and it will come to pass, ¹when some of them be fallen at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.
- 10 And even he that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt : for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and
- 11 they which be with him are valiant men. But I counsel that all Israel be gathered together unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand
- 11 that is by the sea for multitude ; and ²that thou go
- 12 to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground : and of him and of all the men that are with him we will not leave so much as one.
- 13 Moreover, if he ³be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone
- 14 found there. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

vv. 15-23. *Hushai's message to David, and the suicide of Ahithophel.*

- 15 **T**HEN said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel ; and

9. *Some of them.* LXX. Luc. has preferably *some of* (or *among*) *the people*.

10. *And even he*, etc. Any loss sustained at the outset by Absalom's advanced guards (v. 9) would revive the memory of David's ancient prowess and a panic would be created.

11. *And that thou . . . person.* Better, *and that thy Presence* (equivalent to *thy Majesty*) *go to the battle*. But the LXX. and Vulg., for *to the battle*, imply a reading *in the midst of them*, differing from the Heb. by the addition of a single consonant.

13. *If he be gotten*, etc. Hushai has to meet the obvious objection that the delay which he had advocated was favourable to David, who might take advantage of it and retire into a fortress ; and replies that a sufficiently large force could be collected to render even a fortress untenable.

14. *The counsel of Hushai*, etc. It was the adroit combination of caution and confidence, together with the suggestion that Absalom's personal presence with his forces was desirable (appealing as it did to the young man's vanity), that commended Hushai's counsel. Its adoption

- 16 thus and thus have I counselled. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night ¹at the fords of the wilderness, but in any wise pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. ²Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; and a maidservant used to go and tell them; and they went and told king David: for they might not be seen to come into the city.
- 17 But a lad saw them, and told Absalom: and they went both of them away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down thither. And the woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and strewed bruised corn thereon;

¹ Another reading is, in the plains.

² Or, Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stay by En-rogel; so let the maidservant go and tell them, and let them go and tell king David; for they may not be seen to come into the city.

by Absalom, in the historian's opinion, could only be ascribed to a supernaturally inspired infatuation.

16. *Send quickly.* The urgency of the direction was due to the fear that Absalom, on reconsideration, might approve of Ahithophel's wiser counsel, so that it would be well for David to put the Jordan between himself and his foes. David had arranged to await intelligence before crossing the river (xv. 28).

17. *En-rogel.* Literally, "the fuller's fountain." It is mentioned in *Joshua* xv. 7, and is probably the modern *Bir Eyyub* ("Job's well"), at the junction of the Wâdy Sitti Mariam and the Wâdy er-Rabâbi (the ancient Kidron and Hinnom valleys respectively), and on the boundary between the territories of Judah and Benjamin (*Joshua* xv. 7, 8, xviii. 16). It has, however, been urged against this identification that *Bir Eyyub* is a well and not a true spring, and that its situation is too far from the direct road from Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives to the Jordan to suit the present passage; and some have taken *En-rogel* to be *Ain Umm ed Deraj*, "the spring of the Virgin" in the Kidron valley. But the latter is most probably the ancient Gihon, and Gihon and *En-rogel* were certainly distinct (see I. *Kings* i. 9, compared with v. 33).

And they went, etc. Better, *and they used to go and tell king David.* The tenses in the original imply that regular communications were maintained between Hushai in Jerusalem and David at the Jordan. A slave-girl was used as the intermediary between Hushai and the two messengers, for the latter, who had left Jerusalem with David, would be suspected if, on returning with their fathers (xv. 27), they re-entered the city.

18. *Bahurim.* See on xvi. 5.

19. *Bruised corn.* The Heb. word is of uncertain meaning—perhaps *husked corn* (cp. *Prov.* xxvii. 22). The LXX. transliterates—ἀραφῶθ; Aq. and Sym. have *peeled barley* (πιωάνας); LXX. *Luc.* and Th. have *cakes of pressed fruit* (παλάθας). The woman's device here resembles that of Rahab in *Joshua* ii. 6.

- 20 and nothing was known. And Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house; and they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.
- 21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David; and they said unto David, Arise ye, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath
- 22 Ahithophel counselled against you. Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone
- 23 over Jordan. And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

vv. 24-29. *Absalom and David in Gilead.*

- 24 **T**HEN David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. And Absalom set Amasa
- 25 over the host instead of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man, whose name was ¹Ithra the Israelite, that went in to ²Abigal the daughter of Nahash,

¹ In I. Chr. ii. 17, *Jether the Ishmaelite*.
² In I. Chr. ii. 16, 17, *Abigail*.

20. *The brook of water.* The word rendered *brook* is not found elsewhere, and its real meaning is unknown. There is an Assyrian word of similar form, meaning a small water channel, but Driver is not favourable to the suggested connection.

22. *By the morning light.* The LXX. and Vulg. attach these words to the preceding clause.

23. Ahithophel, with characteristic sagacity, saw that Absalom had thrown away his best chance of becoming master of the situation; and as he himself had supported what he felt sure was now the losing side, his life was forfeit, and so he balked his enemies of their revenge by anticipating his fate.

His city. Giloh (xv. 12).

24. *Mahanaim.* The former capital of Eshbaal (Ishbosheth); see on ii. 8. The people of E. Palestine seem to have been more faithful to a cause or a leader that they had once supported than those of W. Palestine.

25. *Ithra the Israelite.* The Alexandrine MS. of the LXX. and I. Chron. ii. 17 call Ithra (or Jether) *the Ishmaelite*, no doubt correctly (a letter having been misread). Amasa and Joab were cousins, and the Chronicler makes them David's nephews, Abigal (or Abigail) and Zeruiah

26 sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. And Israel and
 27 Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. And it came
 to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that
 Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children
 of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar,
 and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, brought beds,
 28 and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and
 barley, and meal, and parched *corn*, and beans,
 29 and lentils, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and butter,
 and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for
 the people that were with him to eat : for they said,
 The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in
 the wilderness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

vv. 1-8. *The battle of the forest.*

Some considerable interval must be assumed to have elapsed between what is related in the preceding chapter, and the battle here described, enabling both sides to complete their preparations.

1 **A**ND David numbered the people that were with
 him, and set captains of thousands and
 2 captains of hundreds over them. And David
 sent forth the people a third part under the hand of

being both represented as daughters of Jesse and sisters of David. But if Abigail, as here stated, was daughter of Nahash, she can, at most, have been only half-sister of David, it being assumed that Nahash was the first husband of David's mother.

27. *Shobi*. Apparently the brother of Hanun (x. 2), and perhaps appointed by David in the room of Hanun as tributary prince. If so, he may have been wishful to exhibit his gratitude and loyalty.

Machir. The protector of Meribaal (Mephibosheth) in his early days (ix. 4).

Barzillai. About him more particulars are given in xix. 32. Some of his descendants (by the female line) appear to have been priests in the time of Ezra (cp. *Ezra* ii. 61, *Neh.* vii. 63).

Rogelim. The site is unknown, though presumably somewhere in Gilead.

28. *Beds*. The LXX. adds *and coverlets*, and represents the number of basons as *ten*.

Parched . . . parched. The second occurrence of the word is probably due to accidental repetition. The LXX. after *meal* has *καὶ ἀλφίτον καὶ κῆμον καὶ φακὸν* (lentils) *καὶ μέλι καὶ βούτυρον καὶ πρόβατα*.

29. *Cheese of kine*. According to some, *dried curds* : others suggest *thick cream*. The LXX. leaves the word untranslated—*σαφφωθ βοῶν* ; but Th. has *γαλαθηνὰ μόσχαρα* (*sucking calves*) and the Vulg. *fat calves*.¹

1. *Thousands . . . hundreds*. Military divisions seemingly based on local groups (cp. p. 53)

2. *Sent forth*. LXX. *Luc.* has *ἐπέστειλε*, *divided* (the people) *into*

¹ The O.L. has both *Lactantes vitulos* and *Vitulos saginatos*,

¹ So some ancient authorities. The Hebrew text has, for now are there ten thousand such as we.

- Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with
 3 you myself also. But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away, they will not care for us : neither if half of us die, will they care for us : ¹but thou art worth ten thousand of us : therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succour
 4 us out of the city. And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people went out
 5 by hundreds and by thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.
 6 So the people went out into the field against Israel :
 7 and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter

three parts, the difference being a single letter. (So too, the O.L. *et triperitutum fecit David populum*). This is preferable, since the army's departure is mentioned subsequently (v. 6). In addition to the three divisions, there was a body of reserves retained in the city (v. 3, 4). Josephus represents David's forces as numbering about four thousand (*Ant.* viii. 10, §1).

3. *But thou art worth*, etc. The R.V. here translates the reading of the LXX., Sym. and the Vulg. : the Heb. has *for now there are ten thousand such as we* (see mg.).

4. *Stood by the gate side*. The forces marched past the king as they issued forth to go to their several positions.

6. *Into the field*. The LXX. has *into the forest*, perhaps to harmonize with what follows : LXX. *Luc. els rō pedlov*.

The forest of Ephraim. The site of the battle is undetermined, though it must have been near Mahanaim (see v. 3 above, xvii. 24, and xix. 3). Gilead "has its ridges covered by forests, under which you may march for the whole day in breezy and fragrant shade" (G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 522). The name *Ephraim* probably came from a settlement of Ephraimites on the E. of Jordan : in the time of Jephthah, the Gileadites were taunted with being fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh (*Judges* xii. 4).

7. *And there was a great slaughter there*. The last word is absent from the LXX. and was probably "introduced here by error from the line below" (Driver). The correct text is most likely *and the slaughter was great*.

8 there that day of twenty thousand men. For the battle was there spread over the face of all the country : and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

vv. 9-18. *The death of Absalom.*

9 **A**ND Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth ;
 10 and the mule that was under him went on. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold,
 11 I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him to the ground ? and I would have given thee ten *pieces of*
 12 silver, and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *pieces of* silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son : for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, ²Beware
 13 that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against ³his life, (and there

¹ Or,
terebinth.

² Heb. *Have a care, whosoever ye be, of &c.*
³ Another reading is, *my.*

8. *The forest devoured*, etc. The expression is obscure, but perhaps means that the fugitives could not extricate themselves from the woods, and perished through exhaustion.

9. *His head caught hold*. As Absalom fled through the forest, his neck became jammed in the forked branches of a tree, and he was swept off the back of his mule.

Oak. Better, *terebinth*, a tree with pinnate leaves and red berries.

He was taken up. Literally, *he was set*. But the LXX. has *he was hung* : cp. v. 10.

11. *Ten pieces of silver*. Where in the O.T. the denomination of coins is omitted (as in I. Kings x. 29, II. Kings vi. 25) shekels are meant : for the value of a shekel see p. 60.

A girdle. Perhaps a military girdle, richly decorated (cp. I. xviii. 4).

12. *Should receive*. Literally, *should be weighing*.

Beware, etc. Strictly (if the text be sound), *Have a care, whoever ye be, of the young man*. But the LXX. reads *Have a care for my sake* (φυλάξατέ μοι) of, etc. (cp. v. 5).

13. *His life*. This is the reading of the Heb. text : the Heb. mg. has *my life* (which would have been forfeited by disregard of the king's command).

¹ Or,
wouldest have
set thyself
against me.
² Heb. *staves*.

³ Or, *spared*.

is no matter hid from the king,) then thou thyself
14 ¹wouldest have stood aloof. Then said Joab, I may
not tarry thus with thee. And he took three ²darts
in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of
Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the
15 oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour
compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him.
16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned
from pursuing after Israel: for Joab ³held back the
17 people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into
the great pit in the forest, and raised over him a
very great heap of stones: and all Israel fled every
18 one to his tent. Now Absalom in his life had taken
and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the
king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my
name in remembrance: and he called the pillar
after his own name: and it is called Absalom's
monument, unto this day.

14. *Three darts*. The Heb. has *three staves* (the term denoting a formidable weapon for beating (*Ex.* xxi. 20), not stabbing). The LXX. by its rendering *τρία βέλη*, suggests that its text contained a word meaning missile weapons. (Two letters seem to have been confused.)

15. *And ten . . . slew him*. Unless in *v.* 14 the word *heart* be used very inexactly, it is difficult not to suspect that this *v.* comes from a parallel narrative, giving a variant account of the circumstances of Absalom's death. With this *v.* the Vulg. connects the concluding clauses of *v.* 14, *cumque adhuc palpitavit hærens in quercu, concurrerunt decem iuvenes*, etc. Josephus, however, represents that the armour-bearers merely removed the dead body (*Ant.* vii. 10, § 2).

16. *The trumpet*. Better, *the (ram's) horn*; see on ii. 28. The Vulg. adds at the end of the verse, *volens parcere multitudini*. Joab knew that with Absalom's death the rebellion was at an end.

17. *Raised . . . stones*. Cp. *Joshua* vii. 26, viii. 29. Possibly the idea behind the custom was that it prevented the ghost of the slain man from plaguing the living (just as a suicide in England used to be buried with a stake thrust through him). It is said to be still customary in the East for a passer-by to cast a stone on the grave of a malefactor.

18. *The king's dale*. Perhaps *vale* is better than *dale* (the Heb. term being applied to "wide avenues running up into mountainous country"). The locality (identified in *Gen.* xiv. 17 with the *vale of Shaveh*) is quite unknown, but is described by Josephus as being two furlongs from Jerusalem (*Ant.* vii. 10, § 3).

No son. The statement is at variance with that of xiv. 27, unless it is assumed that the three sons there mentioned all died young.

And he called . . . name. This clause looks like an expansion of the original by the Massoretic text: it is absent from the LXX.

vv. 19-33. *How David received the tidings of Absalom's death.*

- 19 **T**HEN said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath ¹avenged him of his enemies.
- 20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not be the bearer of tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no
- 21 tidings, because the king's son is dead. Then said Joab to the Cushite, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And the Cushite bowed himself unto
- 22 Joab, and ran. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But come what may, let me, I pray thee, also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou ²wilt have no reward for the tidings?
- 23 But come what may, *said he*, I will run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the
- 24 way of the Plain, and overran the Cushite. Now David sat between the two gates: and the

¹Heb. *judged him from the hand &c.*

²Or, *hast no sufficient tidings.*

19. *Tidings.* Better, *good tidings*, the invariable sense of the Heb. word. *Hath avenged him of his enemies.* Literally, *hath judged him from the hand of his enemies.* The same verb in I. xxiv. 15 is rendered *deliver*.

20. Joab, having a better understanding of the king's mind than Ahimaaz, knew that the death of Absalom would be the most unwelcome tidings that he could carry to David; and being possibly afraid that the latter in a moment of uncontrollable passion would treat the messenger in the same way that he treated the man who brought tidings of Saul's death (iv. 10), preferred to send the news by a mere slave (v. 21).

21. *The Cushite.* I.e. an Ethiopian or Nubian, probably a slave attending upon him. *Cush* was situated S. of Egypt (*Ezek.* xxix. 10, cp. *Is.* xi. 11) and inhabited by Negro tribes. The proper name of the people was *Kesh*.

22. *Thou wilt have no reward, etc.* Literally, *thou hast no tidings finding (i.e., likely to procure) aught.*

23. *Run.* Joab preferred to yield rather than allow himself to be put to further trouble (cp. his attitude towards Absalom's insistence in xiv. 33).

The Plain. Literally, *the Circle.* This was "the specific name of the lower and broader part of the Jordan valley (beginning about 25 miles N. of the Dead Sea), and including apparently the Dead Sea itself, and the small plain at its S. end" (*Driver, Gen.*, p. 152). Here, however, the region meant must be confined to a part of the Jordan valley, called in *Gen.* xiii. 10, 11, I. *Kings* vii. 46, *the Plain (or Circle) of Jordan.* Ahimaaz presumably selected the longer way as the easier and consequently the speedier, whilst the Nubian took a shorter but more hampered route.

24. *Between the two gates.* I.e. between the outer and inner gateways closing the passage through the wall, which here was probably of more

	watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and,
25	behold, a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he
26	came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, <i>another</i> man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth
27	tidings. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He
28	is a good man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, ¹ All is well. And he bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.
¹ Heb. <i>Peace.</i>	
29	And the king said, ² Is it well with the young man Absalom? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, ³ even me thy servant, I saw
² Heb. Is there <i>peace</i> with &c. ? ³ Or, <i>and</i> .	
30	a great tumult, but I knew not what it was. And the king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he

than ordinary thickness, so that the archway was deep enough to carry a gate-house above, and to afford space below for many persons to sit or stand under shelter. The flat roof of the gatehouse apparently communicated with the top of the city wall.

25. *If he be alone.* It was reasonable to suppose that the runner, if unaccompanied, was not a fugitive from a rout, but an accredited messenger.

26. *The watchman called unto the porter and said.* The LXX. has *the watchman at the gate called and said.* This, or something like this, must be the true text, for the person addressed (as appears from the next v.) was not the porter but the king.

Another man. The inserted *another* is found in the LXX. and Vulg.

27. *Me thinketh.* An archaism for *it seemeth to me.* The verb comes from the M.E. *thincan*, "to seem," not from the M.E. *thencan*, "to think," but the two became confused. The pronoun *me* is in the dat. case.

A good man. The worth of the messenger argued the value of the message (cp. I. Kings. i. 42).

28. *Called.* LXX. *Luc.* has *drew near*, a difference of a single letter.

29. *Is it well, etc.* The king in his solicitude for his son's safety brushes aside the intelligence of victory.

The king's servant . . . servant. There is some slight disorder in the Heb.; probably the original text had, *When Joab, the king's servant, sent thy servant.*

I knew not. Ahimaaz in his desire to spare the king a shock seems to have paltered with the truth.

31 turned aside, and stood still. And, behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. 33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

¹ [Ch. xix. 1
in Heb.]

CHAPTER XIX.

THE KING'S RESTORATION.

vv. 1–8a. *Joab's rebuke of David for his absorption in his grief.*

1 AND it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth
2 and mourneth for Absalom. And the ²victory
that day was turned into mourning unto
all the people: for the people heard say that day,
3 The king grieveth for his son. And the people gat
them by stealth that day into the city, as people
that are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.
4 And the king covered his face, and the king cried
with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom,
5 my son, my son! And Joab came into the house
to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day
the faces of all thy servants, which this day have
saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy
daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives

² Heb.
salvation.

32. The Nubian slave did not share the compunctions of Ahimaaz, but blurted out the facts.

33. *As he went.* LXX. *Luc.* has *as he wept*, a difference of a single letter.

2. *And the victory*, etc. The immediate sympathy which the people manifested with David's grief, though partly due to the emotional character of oriental races, was no doubt enhanced by the personal admiration and affection felt for the king.

3. *The city.* I.e. Mahanaim, near which the battle must have been fought.

5. *And Joab came.* Joab, who was hard-headed as well as hard-hearted, realized the dangerous effect which David's absorption in his personal sorrow would have on the temper of the troops who had just shown their loyalty to him.

6 of thy concubines ; in that thou lovest them that hate thee, and hatest them that love thee. For thou hast declared this day, that princes and servants are nought unto thee : for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, 7 then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants : for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry a man with thee this night : and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from thy youth until now. Then 8 the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate : and all the people came before the king.

vv. 8b-15. *Judah forestalls the rest of the tribes at David's suggestion.*

David's effort to conciliate Judah, where the recent revolt had its centre, by a course of action calculated to estrange the rest of the nation, was not very wise. The sequel shews that his policy opened once more scarcely closed tribal cleavages (see ch. xx.).

8b **N**OW Israel had fled every man to his tent. 9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines ; and 10 now he is fled out of the land from Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word

6. *For . . . for*, etc. The second causal conjunction is merely resumptive of the first.

7. *Comfortably*. Better, *kindly* (*Gen.* i. 21), the original phrase being usually applied to the addresses of a wooer or a bridegroom (*Gen.* xxxiv. 3, *Judges* xix. 3, *Hosea* ii. 14).

8. *Came before the king*. The troops, who had previously slunk into the city, now mustered before the king in the open space at the gateway to receive his commendation on their success.

8b. *Israel*. I.e. the section of the people that had supported Absalom.

His tent. An archaic expression surviving from the early nomadic stage of Israel's history : cp. xx. 1, I. iv. 10, xiii. 2, I. *Kings* xii. 16.

9. *At strife*. LXX. *Luc.*, has γογγύζοντες, "murmuring" (a confusion between γ and β). The death of Absalom and the ruin of his cause allowed gratitude for David's early services once more to assert itself.

10. At the end of this v. there should be inserted the words which the Heb. text has at the end of v. 11, *Now the speech of all Israel had come to*

- 11 of bringing the king back? And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *to bring him* to his house. Ye are my brethren, ye are my bone and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent unto the king, *saying*, 15 Return thou, and all thy servants. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to bring the king over Jordan.

vv. 16-23. *Shimei's apology.*

Shimei's insulting behaviour to David in the course of the withdrawal from Jerusalem is related in xvi. 5-13. Whether he had influenced his fellow tribesmen to return to their allegiance by way of atoning for his own misconduct, or had joined them because he saw them resolved to change sides, does not appear; but in any case he seems to have been a man of position in his tribe (see v. 16, note).

- 16 **A**ND Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

the king. The LXX. has them in both places, but their proper position is clearly not in v. 11 (where they break the connection between David's address in vv. 11 and 12) but here, where they explain David's message in v. 11.

11. *Seeing the . . . king.* This clause must be transposed to v. 10, in the form given in the note. The final words *to his house* are here absent from the LXX., which attaches them to the end of v. 12.

13. The overtures to Amasa, who, like Joab, was David's nephew (I. Chron. ii. 15-17, see on xvii. 25), were dictated by the expediency of securing the support of the previously disaffected Judean forces, and by the desire to humiliate Joab for his disobedience in killing Absalom.

15. *Judah.* I.e. in the persons of representative elders (v. 11).

Gilgal. Situated between Jericho and the fords of the Jordan. It was the site of Joshua's first camp after the passage of the river (Joshua iv. 19), and afterwards became a popular sanctuary (Amos iv. 4, v. 5).

16. *To meet king David.* 17. *And there . . . with him.* The vv. are wrongly divided here; all these words should be included in v. 16, and should run, . . . *to meet king David, and a thousand men of Benjamin with him.*

- 17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went through Jordan in the presence of the king. And there went over ¹a ferry boat to bring over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he ²was come over Jordan. And he said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed? And David said, What have I to

¹ Or, the
convoy.

² Or, would
go over.

17. *And Ziba*, etc. The words that begin here, down to *thought good* (in v. 18) should be placed within a parenthesis, since the account of Shimei is continued in v. 18b. For Ziba see xvi. 1-4.

And they went through. The conjunction should be omitted (being an accidental duplication of the last letter of the previous word) and the passage rendered. *Now Ziba . . . and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him had dashed through the Jordan*, etc. The family sought by their impetuosity to demonstrate their loyal zeal.

18. *A ferry boat*. The Heb. word everywhere else means a *ford*, which is also the sense put upon it by the LXX. and Vulg. here, so that, if it be assumed that a single letter has been accidentally duplicated, the rendering will be, *and they kept passing over the ford*. The repeated crossings would be needed to help with the women and the baggage.

When he was come over. Since David was still on the E. bank of the Jordan (see v. 34), this rendering should be corrected to *when he was about to cross over*: cp. mg.

20. *The house of Joseph*. That the tribe of Benjamin was closely connected with the Joseph tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh) is reflected in the representation that Joseph and Benjamin were sons of the same mother (Rachel); and it is possible that the name *Benjamin*, meaning "son of the south," refers to the position of its territory as situated to the S. of Ephraim, or as once constituting the southern portion of Ephraim (cp. *E. Bi.* i. 534).

21. *Abishai*. For other illustrations of Abishai's impulsiveness and bloodthirstiness see xvi. 9, I. xxvi. 8.

The LORD'S Anointed. Cp. David's attitude towards Saul, i. 14-16. Some of the sanctity attaching to God was attributed to the rulers who represented Him (see *Ex.* xxii. 28 mg., *Is.* vii. 14, ix. 6, *Ps.* xlv. 6): cp. *Rom.* xiii. 4-6, I. *Peter* ii. 14.

- 22 do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?
- 23 And the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

vv. 24-30. *Meribaal's explanation.*

- 24 **A**ND Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came home in peace. And it came to pass, ¹when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go ²with the king; because thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is ³as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all my father's house were but ⁴dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own

¹ Or, *when Jerusalem was come.*

² Another reading is, *to.*

³ Or, *the.*

⁴ Heb. *men of death.*

22. *Shall there any man, etc.* Cp. Saul's conduct, I. xi. 13. Shimei's insults were not really forgiven by David, and his punishment was only deferred: see I. Kings ii. 8-11.

24. *The son of Saul.* The LXX. more accurately has υἱὸς υἱοῦ Σαούλ. *Dressed his feet.* The LXX. adds *nor trimmed his nails* (cp. Int. p. 7). *Beard.* Better, *moustache* (of which the word here used by the LXX., μύσταξ, is the origin).

25. *Was come to Jerusalem.* Since Meribaal (Mephibosheth) was left at Jerusalem (xvi. 3), and he is described as *coming down* to meet the king, this rendering must be wrong. The original admits of being translated *when Jerusalem (i.e. the citizens) was come* (cp. Vulg. *cumque Jerusalem occurrisset regi*); but it is best to assume the accidental loss of a letter, and to render, *when he was come from Jerusalem.*

26. *Thy servant . . . ass.* The LXX. (followed by the Vulg.) has *thy servant said to him, Saddle me the ass.* Ziba seemingly saddled the animal and rode away on it.

27. *As an angel of God.* I.e. capable of discerning unerringly between the true version of the incident and the false (cp. xiv. 17, 20).

28. *Dead men.* I.e. deserving of death (the same original being used in xii. 5). For David's treatment of Meribaal (Mephibosheth) see ix. 10-13.

table. What right therefore have I yet that I
 29 should cry any more unto the king? And the
 king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more
 of thy matters? I say, Thou and Ziba divide the
 30 land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea,
 let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is
 come in peace unto his own house.

vv. 31-39. *David's gratitude to Barzillai.*

31 **A**ND Barzillai the Gileadite came down from
 Rogelim; and he went over Jordan with the
 32 king, to conduct him over Jordan. Now Bar-
 zillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old:
 and he had provided the king with sustenance while
 he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.
 33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over
 with me, and I will sustain thee with me in Jerusalem,
 34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How many are the
 days of the years of my life, that I should go up
 35 with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day
 fourscore years old: can I discern between good
 and bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what
 I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing
 men and singing women? wherefore then should
 thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

What right, etc. The Heb. implies that Meribaal (Mephibosheth) repudiated any desire to worry the king further. But LXX. *Luc.* represents him as pleading that only from the king could he receive justice, and as persisting in his appeal for redress (*καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς τίνος ἐστὶ μοι δικαιοσύνη; καὶ ἐβόησεν, etc.*). This suits better the impatient tone of David's reply.

29. *Why speakest thou, etc.* LXX. *Luc.* has *τί πλῆθύνεις ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους σου;* (γ and δ being read in place of ς and γ).

30. David himself was only half convinced that Meribaal's (Mephibosheth's) explanation was true, but there seems no reason to doubt its sincerity, though allowance must be made for the oriental extravagance of his language. He had nothing to gain by a transfer of the crown to Absalom, and doubtless Ziba had been unprincipled enough to take advantage of his master's helplessness.

31. *Barzillai.* For his services to David see xvii. 27-29.

Went over Jordan. Better, *passed on to the Jordan.* It is clear from vv. 33, 37, that Barzillai only accompanied the king as far as the river, and did not cross it.

32. *Lay.* An archaism for *stayed* (cp. *Joshua* ii. 1).

35. *The voice of singing, etc.* For such accompaniments to banquets cp. *Isa.* v. 11, *Amos* vi. 4-6.

- 36 Thy servant would but just go over Jordan with the king : and why should the king recompense it
 37 me with such a reward ? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But behold, thy servant Chimham ; let him go over with my lord the king ; and do to him what
 38 shall seem good unto thee. And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee : and whatsoever thou shalt ¹require of me, that will I do for
 39 thee. And all the people went over Jordan, and the king went over : and the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him ; and he returned unto his own place.

¹ Heb. *choose to lay upon.*

vv. 40-43. Friction between Judah and the rest of the nation.

The action of David narrated in *vv. 11-15* bore its natural fruit. Had he desired to be welcomed back by a united people, he would, in view of the distance separating many of the tribes from the capital, have given to all ample notice of his wishes. As it was, the partiality which he showed to his own tribe inevitably created a sense of grievance amongst the others.

- 40 **S**O the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went over with him ; and all the people of Judah brought the king over, and also half the people of Israel.
 41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king, and his household, over Jordan, and all David's

36. *But just go over Jordan.* Better, *go a little way to Jordan* (cp. on *v. 31*), though possibly the words *to Jordan* should be omitted.

38. David's promise in regard to Chimham was faithfully observed (see *I. Kings ii. 7*). From *Jer. xli. 17* (where the true reading is probably *the sheepfolds of Chimham*) it is perhaps to be inferred that to Chimham were given some lands near Bethlehem, with which his name was long associated.

39. *The king went over.* Some cursive MSS. of the LXX. have *εἰστήκει* (*stood still*) instead of *διέβη*, which is preferable. David stopped with Barzillai until the troops crossed before him ; next, he parted with his late host ; and then he himself crossed the river (*v. 40*):

40. *Brought the king over.* The LXX. has *were passing over with the king*.

Half the people of Israel. The other half, consisting of the remoter tribes, could not arrive in time.

¹ Or, and
were not we
the first to
speak of
bringing back
our king?

- 42 men with him? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath
43 he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, ¹that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

CHAPTER XX.

SHEBA'S REVOLT.

Of the irritation of the northern tribes described in the previous chapter advantage was taken by an adventurer named Sheba, a Benjamite, who raised the standard of rebellion. The rising had little support behind it, but the soreness which the friction with the tribe of Judah had caused did not readily heal, and no doubt contributed to

42. *Hath he given us any gift?* This is the drift of the passage, but the Heb. is corrupt. A plausible emendation is *hath he taken* and sent to us messes of meat?—which was a way of showing honour (cp. xi. 8, Gen. xliii. 34).

43. *Ten parts.* Perhaps ten out of eleven (cp. the sense of *duæ partes* (2), *tres partes* (3), etc., in Latin), for the tribes are reckoned as eleven in I. Kings xi. 31 compared with v. 32, 36 (though the ideal number *twelve* occurs in v. 30). The ten parts were probably Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, Reuben, and Gad. The landless tribe of Levi is ignored, and Simeon at this time must practically have been absorbed in Judah. For *ten parts* Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 11, § 5) substitutes *eleven parts*.

And we have also more right in David. Since no distinction can be drawn between *in the king* and *in David*, the Heb. text must be faulty. The LXX. supplies a correction of it by reading *and I am also the first-born rather than thou* (the letters כ and נ having been corrupted into two ט's). The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (descended from Joseph), who doubtless took the lead in the dispute, seem to have claimed the prerogative of the first-born (which properly belonged to Reuben, I. Chron. v. 1) on the strength of the fact that Joseph, whose two sons each counted as a tribe, had the double portion which fell to the first-born (*Deut.* xxi. 17).

That our advice . . . king. Better (with a slight emendation in the Heb.), *was not our word first for bringing back our king?* (cp. mg.). The superfluous word in the Heb. is easily accounted for by its likeness to the initial of the next word (dittography).

the open revolt against the dynasty of David in the reign of Rehoboam.

vv. 1-2. *Sheba attempts to renew the rebellion.*

1 **A**ND there happened to be there a man of 'Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. So all the men of Israel went up from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

¹ That is, worthlessness.

v. 3. *David's seclusion of his concubines.*

3 **A**ND David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and provided them with sustenance, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, ²living in widowhood.

² Heb. in widowhood of life.

vv. 4-7. *Operations against Sheba.*

4 **T**HEN said the king to Amasa, Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be thou here present. So Amasa went to call the men of Judah together: but he tarried longer than the 6 set time which he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do

1. *A man of Belial.* See on xvi. 7.
Blew the trumpet. Better, *blew the horn* (see p. 94). For this as a signal of revolt see xv. 10, II. Kings ix. 13.

3. *The ten women.* For the reason of their seclusion see xvi. 21 f.
Living in widowhood. The Heb. seems to mean *in widowhood of life*, but if this means "in life-long widowhood," it does not accurately describe their peculiar position, which consisted in their living as widows, though their husband was alive. The LXX. has *living widows*, which differs from the Heb. only in the vowel points. Whether this was the Hebrew equivalent for what Americans term "grass widows" cannot be determined.

4. *Amasa.* The fact that the suppression of the rebellion was entrusted to Amasa implies that David had fulfilled his promise to appoint him captain of the host in the room of Joab (xix. 13). But his lack of promptitude left David no choice but to fall back on the discarded Joab (see on v. 6) for the discharge of the duty; and Joab, when he met Amasa, took the opportunity of removing his supplanter.

* 6. *Abishai.* The Syr. rightly has *Joab*, of whom some mention is required prior to the allusion to him in v. 8. This is confirmed by the LXX., which, though it has *Abishai* here, has in v. 7 *καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁπισθ' αὐτοῦ Ἀβισσαὶ καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες Ἰωαβ, κτλ.* Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 11, § 6) also has *Joab*.

us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape out of our sight.
 7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

vv. 8-13. *The assassination of Amasa by Joab.*

8 **W**HEN they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. And Joab was girded with his apparel of war that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and
 9 as he went forth it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, Is it well with thee, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.
 10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was

Escape out of our sight. The general sense of the Heb. phrase is that which is expressed by the Vulg., *ne . . . effugiat nos*, but the precise meaning of the metaphor (which literally is either (1) *take away our eyes*, or (2) *cast a shade over our eyes*, LXX. σκιάσει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἡμῶν) is obscure. LXX. Luc. has σκεπασθῇ ἀφ' ἡμῶν, implying a different reading.

7. *There went out after him*, etc. In the Heb. the pronoun refers to Abishai, but in the LXX. (καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ Ἀβεσσά καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες Ἰωάβ, etc.) it must allude to Joab, whose name originally occurred (in place of Abishai's) in v. 6 (see note).

8. *The great stone.* Possibly a sacred stone, like that called *Ebenezer* (I. vii. 12 mg.). A natural boulder, or a pillar like a Celtic *menhir*, was regarded by the primitive Semites as the abode of a deity (cp. the name *Bethel* given to a stone by Jacob, *Gen.* xxviii. 19 mg.) or as consecrated in some way by his presence; and upon it offerings were laid or poured (cp. *Gen.* xxviii. 22, and see W. R. Smith, *RS.*, p. 204).

Gibeon. See on ii. 12.

And Joab was girded, etc. The Heb. text is awkward and unnatural, and has probably suffered some corruption. A plausible correction, adopted by Driver, is *And as for Joab, a sword was in his hand underneath his raiment, and upon it* (i.e. his raiment) *he was girt with a sword fastened upon his loins in its sheath.* Joab, besides the sword which he was visibly wearing, had another in his left hand concealed beneath his apparel.

And as he went forth. This, without any mention of the place whence he issued, is obscure. The LXX. has a double rendering, καὶ ἡ μάχα ἐξῆλθεν καὶ αὐτὴ ἐξῆλθεν καὶ ἔπεσεν, but makes it clear that what came forth was not Joab but his sword, which fell from its scabbard. The original text must have been *and it came forth and fell to the ground.*

10. *But Amasa*, etc. Amasa naturally had no suspicion that Joab had

in Joab's hand : so he smote him therewith in the belly, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again ; and he died. And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. And there stood by him one of Joab's young men, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him follow Joab. And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of the high way. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the high way into the field, and cast a garment over him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the high way, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

vv. 14-22. *The end of Sheba.*

14 **A**ND he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maacah, and all the Berites : and they were gathered together, and went also

a second sword, and the fall of the only weapon which Joab appeared to be wearing put him off his guard.

11. *By him.* I.e. by the fallen Amasa.

He that favoureth, etc. Joab's follower appealed to the troops of Amasa to transfer their services to Joab, now that their commander was slain. The appeal was unheeded so long as the body of Amasa lay on the road, since every one, as he came up, stopped to gaze ; but when it was removed the soldiers at once followed Joab in the pursuit of Sheba.

14. *And he.* I.e. Sheba, who traversed all the land from S. to N. in the endeavour to obtain support, but for the most part in vain.

Unto Abel, and to Beth-maacah. The conjunction is an accidental error ; only one place is meant, and is properly described in v. 15, *unto Abel of Beth-maacah*. This (called in II. Chron. xvi. 4 *Abel-maim*) was situated near the entrance of the gorge between Lebanon and Hermon, where the Jordan descends into the plain N. of the Waters of Merom (Lake Huleh). It was a little to the W. of Laish (Leshem) or Dan, and is the modern *Abel Kamh*.

The Berites. As a clan of this name is nowhere else mentioned, it has been plausibly conjectured that the name should be replaced by the *Bichrites*, Sheba's own clan. The semicolon should be put after *Beth-maacah* and the rest of the v. should run, *and as for all the Bichrites, they were gathered together and went in (i.e., to Abel) after him* (the word also being omitted, after the LXX.). The rendering *were gathered together* implies the reading given in the Heb. mg. The Heb. text has *they esteemed him lightly*, which must refer to the tribes of Israel, not to the Bichrites ; and if, on the assumption of an accidental misplacement, the words are rearranged, the rendering will then be, *and he went through all*

¹ Or,
undermined.

- 15 after him. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah, and they cast up a mount against the city, and it stood against the rampart: and all the people that were with Joab ¹battered the wall, to throw it down. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And he came near unto her; and the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.
- 18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*. I am of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel:

the tribes of Israel unto Abel of Beth-maacah and they esteemed him lightly; but all the Bichrites went in (to Abel) after him.

15. *And they came, etc.* I.e. the pursuers under the leadership of Joab.

It stood against the rampart. The rampart seems to have been distinct from the wall, and may have been a detached fortification (LXX. *προτειχισμα*): if so, the mount was probably a bank of earth heaped against it, with an inclined surface which enabled the besiegers to reach the summit; and whilst some from thence engaged with missiles the defenders on the top of the wall, others descended to the intervening space to breach the wall from below. But Driver takes the word rendered *rampart* to be the space between the outer and inner fortifications, consisting partly of a moat, and translates, *it (the mount) stood in the moat.*

Battered . . . down. Better, *were battering to throw down the wall.* But the LXX. has ἐνοῦσαν καταβαλεῖν τὸ τεῖχος, *were devising how to throw down the wall.*

16. *Cried . . . out of the city.* The LXX. has *cried . . . from the wall and said.*

18. *They shall surely ask, etc.* This, as it stands, must mean that the citizens of Abel had such a reputation for wisdom that people in perplexity used to accept the counsel they gave as decisive. But with the present text there is such a lack of connection between this *v.* and the next that there must be some corruption. The LXX. to a rendering of virtually the same text as the Heb. joins another which implies a different text, ἡρωτημένους ἡρωτήθη ἐν τῇ Ἀβελ καὶ ἐν Δάν εἰ ἐξέλιπον ἃ ἔθεντο οἱ πιστοὶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, *Let them ask in Abel and in Dan whether the ordinances had ever come to an end (i.e. ceased to be observed) which the faithful of Israel had established.* This supplies the required connection between *vv.* 18 and 19, the implication being that Abel was one of the last places where revolutionary changes, political or other, would be found, and so the attempt to destroy the city as a hotbed of sedition was unjustified.

19. *I am of . . . in Israel.* This clause is a corruption of the concluding words of the true text of *v.* 18, as given above (*which the faithful of Israel had established*).

thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance
 20 of the LORD? And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or
 21 destroy. The matter is not so: but a man of the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the
 22 wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

vv. 23-26. *A second list of David's officers of state.*

This summary resembles that in viii. 16-18, differing from it in the name of the State Secretary (though see on viii. 17), and of the Court priest, and by the inclusion of the official in charge of the labour gang.

23 **N**OW Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the
 24 ¹Cherethites and over the Pelethites: and Adoram was over the ²tribute: and Jehoshaphat the

¹ Another reading is, *Carites*. See 11. Kings xi. 4.
² Or, *levy*.

A mother in Israel. I.e. a city important enough to have dependent villages (see on viii. 1).

22. *Went unto all the people.* The LXX. has εἰσῆλθον ἡ γυνὴ πρὸς πάντα τὸν λαόν, καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν, which seems to be a transposition of what is probably the true reading, *And the woman went into the city and spake unto all the people.*

23. *Cherethites.* This is the reading of the Heb. mg., supported by the LXX., Aq. and Sym.: the Heb. text has *Carites* (or Carians), who are mentioned in II. Kings xi. 4, 19 as constituting the bodyguard of king Joash.

24. *Adoram.* The LXX. has *Adoniram*, which occurs in I. Kings iv. 6, v. 14, and is more analogous to other names of similar formation, such as *Malchiram*. It means "my lord is exalted."

The tribute. Better, *the forced labour* (or *labour gang*): see p. 55. Adoram (or Adoniram) occupied the position here described until the reign of Rehoboam. The institution of this system of forced labour, involving as it did the loss of much personal liberty, was part of the price that had to be paid for the internal order and external security accruing from the establishment of the monarchy (cp. I. viii. 11-20). The unpopularity of it is attested by the revolt under Rehoboam and the murder of Adoram.

¹ Or, *chronicler*.
² Or, *secretary*.
³ Or, a *chief minister*.
 See I. Chr. xviii. 17.

25 son of Ahilud was the ¹recorder: and Sheva was ²scribe:
 26 and Zadok and Abiathar were priests: and Ira also
 the Jairite was ³priest unto David.

CHAPTERS XXI.—XXIV.

On the relations of these chapters to the rest of the book see p. 22. The various materials, out of which the chapters have been constituted, must once have been arranged differently, for xxi. 1-14 and xxiv. clearly belong together (see xxiv. 1 and cp. xxiv. 25 with xxi. 14); but have been dislocated by the insertion between them of the list of warriors in xxi. 15-22, xxiii. 8-39; whilst this list itself has been divided into two portions by the later insertion of the poetical pieces in xxii. and xxiii. 1-7.

CHAPTER XXI.

vv. 1-14. A famine, its cause, and its removal.

This section is notable not only for the pathetic figure of Rizpah but also for the light it throws upon the habits of thought of the age—the belief that the continuous famine was due to the displeasure of Jehovah, that the distress could only be brought to an end by satisfaction for the national offence committed, and that bloodshed, in defiance of a covenant, could only be expiated by the death of some members of the family of the blood-shedder. The date of the incident is not indicated, but it must have occurred after David's protection of Meribaal (Mephibosheth) (see v. 7) and before the rebellion of Absalom (see xvi. 8).

1 **A**ND there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put

26. *The Jairite.* The clan of the Jairites from which Ira sprang belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (*Num.* xxxii. 41). Since one Greek MS. here has *ὁ Ιέθερ* for *the Jairite*, some have identified Ira with the warrior named in xxiii. 38 who is called *the Ithrite*. On non-Levitical *priests* see p. 66.

1. *A famine.* Famines might be occasioned by the devastation inflicted by enemies, but were more commonly caused by the attacks of locusts (*Joel* i. ii.) or by lack of rain. It was the last that produced the famine in the present case (see v. 10): cp. *Ruth* i. 1, *I. Kings* xvii. 1.

The face of the LORD. I.e. His Presence in the tent where the Ark was kept. (The Shew Bread (*I.* xxi. 6) is called in Heb. "the Bread of the Face"). The Vulg. has *consuluit oraculum Domini*.

For Saul . . . house. If this were the meaning of the passage, the Hebrew would be different. The text has undergone a slight corruption through an erroneous division between the letters of two adjacent words. The LXX. preserves the true reading, *upon Saul and upon his house rests blood*: cp. the phrase in *Deut.* xix. 10 (end).

- 2 to death the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them
3 in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah :) and David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?
4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, It is no matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for
5 you. And they said unto the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, ²that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of

¹ Or, neither for us shall thou put any man to death in Israel.

² Or, so that we have been destroyed.

He put to death the Gibeonites. No other record of Saul's crime has survived, though there is a possible allusion to it in iv. 3.

2. *Now the Gibeonites*, etc. The insertion of this parenthetical note here has made it necessary to reproduce part of the opening words of v. 2 at the beginning of v. 3.

The Amorites. In *Joshua* ix. 3-7 the Gibeonites are represented as Hivites. The term *Amorites* properly seems to have designated the peoples E. of the Jordan (the subjects of Sihon and Og); but was sometimes used more comprehensively (see p. 36).

Had sworn. See *Joshua* ix. 15, 19.

3. *Make atonement.* Perhaps better, *make propitiation*, the person propitiated being God. The primary sense of the Heb. verb is probably *to cover*, in the sense of inducing (by a present) the offended person not to notice the offence (cp. *Gen.* xxxii. 20), or of preventing, by a sacrificial rite, an offence, or offending object, from being noticed (*Lev.* xvi. 16): see Driver, *Dt.*, p. 425-6.

That ye may bless, etc. The expiation of the wrong would *ipso facto* bring a blessing upon the land in the form of the much-needed rain.

4. *It is no matter of silver*, etc. *I.e.* money compensation would not be accepted. To receive such was forbidden in the case of deliberate murder in the later law embodied in *Num.* xxxv. 31, but seems to be regarded as permissible in David's time. Such compensation would correspond to the Saxon *wergild*, which was paid to the kindred of a murdered man if they consented to forego the right of blood-revenge.

Neither is it for us, etc. The meaning is not quite clear, but the probable sense is that the Gibeonites did not wish to obtain satisfaction at the expense of Israel at large but only of the house of Saul. The Vulg. renders it by *neque volumus ut interficiatur homo de Israel*.

5. *That devised against us*, etc. Both the text and the mg. of the R.V. are unsatisfactory renderings of the Heb. text, which is probably faulty. The LXX. seems to have had *that thought to destroy us from remaining*, etc.

¹ In I. Sam.
xviii. 19,
Merab.

- 6 the borders of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD.
7 And the king said, I will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of ¹Michal the daughter of Saul whom she bare to
9 Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, and they fell *all* seven together: and they were put to death in the days of harvest, in the
10 first days, at the beginning of barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and

6. *Seven men of his sons.* The solidarity between a man and his children was held at this time and at earlier periods to justify the execution of the offspring for their parents' offence; cp. *Joshua* vii. 24 f., and see p. 66.

Hang them up unto the LORD. Cp. *Num.* xxv. 4 (LXX. παραδειγματίζειν. The precise manner of execution is doubtful, but *v.* 10 (*nor the beasts of the field*) is against the idea that it was any kind of hanging (Sym. ἵνα κρεμάσωμεν): the verb occurring here is not the same as that in *v.* 12. The LXX. here has ἐξηλίσσωμεν (*to expose to the sun*), Aq. ἀναπήξωμεν (*to impale*), Vulg. crucifigamus. W. R. Smith suggests *cast down from a rock* (note *they fell* in the next clause and *rock* in *v.* 10), though the verb is not used of this form of punishment in *II. Chron.* xxv. 12.

Gibeah of Saul. A locality in Benjamin, N. of Jerusalem, identified with the modern Tell el Fûl. It was known as Gibeah of Saul from being his birthplace. The LXX., Aq., and Sym. all have *Gibeon of Saul*. If *Gibeon* is original, the name of *Saul* was probably added in the Heb. after *Gibeon* had been corrupted to *Gibeah* (cp. *I.* xi. 4, xv. 34), and was subsequently introduced into the Greek.

The chosen of the LORD. This expression is not elsewhere used of Saul; and since *v.* 9 refers to a *mountain* as the place of the execution, and the difference between *chosen* and *in the mountain* is in Heb. of the slightest (a confusion of π and ρ) it has been conjectured that the true text is *in the mountain of JEHOVAH*: cp. *I.* x. 5.

7. *Because of the LORD'S oath.* See *I.* xviii. 3, xx. 8, 17, 42.

8. *Michal.* This must be an error; Merab, not Michal, was given to Adriel (*I.* xviii. 19), and two Heb. MSS. and the Syr. rightly read *Merab* here.

The Meholathite. I.e. of Abel-Meholah, a place near Beth-shan (*v.* 12).

9. *In the days of harvest.* I.e. the end of April and beginning of May.

10. *Sackcloth.* Literally, *the sackcloth*, which she wore as a token of mourning (see p. 100).

- spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured upon them from heaven; and she suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field
- 11 by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.
- 12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the 'street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, in the day that the Philistines slew
- 13 Saul in Gilboa: and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that
- 14 were hanged. And they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

¹ Or, broad place.

vv. 15-21. *Exploits of certain of David's warriors.*

This account of successes gained in single fight by four of David's servants over four gigantic Philistines clearly relates to the period of the Philistine wars narrated in v. 17-25, early in David's reign: cp. v. 15, *went down*, with the same phrase in v. 17.

- 15 **A**ND the Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David

Harvest. The LXX. has *barley harvest*, see v. 9.

Until water, etc. *I.e.* until the rains of autumn. This long exposure of the executed victims was contrary to the direction in *Deut.* xxi. 22, and favours the generally accepted view that *Deuteronomy* was not at this time in existence.

12. *Beth-shan.* In the Greek period called *Scythopolis*, the modern *Beisan*. It is situated 3 miles W. of the Jordan, at the entrance to the valley of Jezreel, which leads up to the plain of Esdraelon. For the incident here alluded to see I. xxxi. 10-12.

14. *They buried.* On the importance attached to burial see p. 60. The long deprivation of burial rites aggravated the punishment.

Zela. Nothing is known of the site.

Jonathan his son. The LXX. adds *and the bones of them that were hanged* (v. 11), which seems to be required.

15. *Again.* The word implies that the beginning of the present narrative has been lost.

Went down. Probably from Hebron.

And David waxed faint. The LXX. has *καὶ ἐπορεύθη Δαυὶδ*. If

¹ Heb.
Raphah.

² Or, *new*
armour.

³ See I. Chr.
xx. 4-8.

⁴ In I. Chr.
xx. 4, *Gezer.*

⁵ In I. Chr.
xx. 4, *Sippai.*

- 16 waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the ¹giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with ²a new sword, thought to have slain David.
- 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel. ³And it came to pass after this that there was again war with the Philistines at ⁴Gob: then Sibbecai the Hushathite slew ⁵Saph, which was of the sons of the ¹giant. And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Beth-lehemite

this is the original reading, it should be followed by the name of the place whither David proceeded. The statement in v. 18 that *there was again war with the Philistines at Gob* suggests the place was Gob; if so, this name is concealed in that of the giant mentioned in the next v. Probably, therefore, the true reading is something like this, *and David went and stayed (i.e. encamped) in Gob*. The verb rendered *stayed* is almost indistinguishable from *Ishbi*, and *in Gob* differs from *benob* only by the slight distinction between *ב* and *נ*.

16. *Which was of the sons of the giant.* If the end of v. 15 is emended in the way described in the previous note, the name of the Philistine giant is lost here. The Heb. for *the giant* is *the Raphah* (mg.) a collective, here and in vv. 18, 20, 22, for *the Rephaim* (see on v. 18).

Spear. The Philistine Goliath in I. xvii. 5-7 is described as having a helmet, a coat of mail, and a javelin of brass, but his spear's head was of iron. The term here used for *spear* is not that employed in I. xvii. 7; and some have thought that the word should be corrected to *helmet*, but if there is an error of transcription at all, a more plausible emendation is *javelin*, the term used in xvii. 7 (loss of a letter). It was the head alone that was of brass (or bronze).

In weight. This word is probably a corruption of *shekels* (to which a letter has accidentally been prefixed). If the shekel was a "heavy" shekel of 320 grains, 300 shekels would be between 12 and 13 lbs.

A new sword. The Vulg. takes the missing word to be *sword*, and Sym. also has *μάχαραν*; but possibly the word rendered *new* is corrupt and describes a weapon. The LXX. has *κορύνην* (club), but this would be carried, not girt at the side. Theod. and LXX. *Luc.* have *παρὰ ὤμων*, which (it has been suggested) may mean *a dagger*.

17. *The lamp.* The figure here seems to denote the prosperous fortune of Israel, which depended on David's safety: cp. *Job.* xviii. 6, *Prov.* xiii. 9.

18. *Gob.* The LXX. and Syr. have *Gath* (cp. v. 20), and I. *Chron.* xx. 4 has *Gezer*.

Hushathite. Hushah was a clan of Judah (I. *Chron.* iv. 4).

Saph. In I. *Chron.* xx. 4 *Sippai*.

19. *Jaare-oregim.* This name, meaning "woods of weavers," is a most

slew ¹Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was
 20 like a weaver's beam. And there was again war
 at Gath, where was a man of great stature, that
 had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot
 six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also
 21 was born to the ²giant. And when he ³defied Israel,
 Jonathan the son of ⁴Shimei David's brother slew
 22 him. These four were born to the ²giant in Gath;
 and they fell by the hand of David, and by the
 hand of his servants.

¹ In I. Chr.
 xx. 5, *the*
brother of
Goliath.
² Heb.
Raphah.
³ Or,
reproached.
⁴ In I. Sam.
 xvi. 9,
Shammah;
 in I. Chr.
 ii. 13, xx. 7,
Shimea.

CHAPTER XXII.

A PSALM ATTRIBUTED TO DAVID.

The Psalm contained in this chapter appears, with certain variations, in the Psalter (Book I.) as *Ps. xviii.* The circumstance that it thus exists in twofold form affords unusual help for the textual criticism of it, for in this instance we are able to compare two surviving Hebrew texts, whereas in the rest of the book a single Hebrew text has to be compared with a text reconstructed from the Greek or other versions. Moreover, of the present psalm there exist the usual versions corresponding to each of

unlikely one, and the true name is undoubtedly preserved in I. *Chron.* xx. 5, *Jair*, of which *Jaare* is a corruption (by the transposition of a letter). The word *oregim*, meaning "weavers," is an accidental intrusion from the end of the verse.

Goliath the Gittite. The statement here, that Goliath was killed by Elhanan, contradicts the account in I. xvii. that he was slain by David, and the Chronicler (or a copyist), to avoid the discrepancy, substitutes (in I. *Chron.* xx. 5) for the present passage *Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite.* It is intrinsically more probable that an exploit of Elhanan's became assigned to the more famous David than the reverse, and it has been pointed out (see pp. 16, 21) that the account of David's success over Goliath belongs (as far as can be judged) to the later of the two series of duplicate narratives in the Books of *Samuel*. This, then, is likely to be the more authentic account of Goliath's death.

A weaver's beam. Better, *a weaver's shaft* (or rod), to which the leashes (or loops holding the warp threads) were fastened. "The shaft of a good-sized loom, with a heavy warp, must have been considerably thicker than the ordinary light spear-shaft" (*E. Bi.* iv. col. 5285).

20. *A man of great stature.* This is probably the sense of the unusual expression in the Heb. text, and is confirmed by I. *Chron.* xx. 6 (where the ordinary phrase is employed). The Heb. mg. (which the LXX. follows) has *a man of strife*.

21. *Jonathan.* The warrior here mentioned can be identical with the Jonathan named in I. *Chron.* xxvii. 32 only if the Heb. word usually rendered *uncle* be taken to mean *kinsman*, and to be applicable to a nephew.

Shimei. This is the reading of the Heb. text: the Heb. mg. has *Shimea*, as in I. *Chron.* xx. 7.

the two Heb. texts. It will appear that many, though not all, of the variations between the present text and that in the Psalter are due to accidental errors of transcription.

As most of the lines in the Heb. are trimeters, it is reasonable to assume that this metre was maintained throughout, so that, where in one or both of the texts a line is of disproportionate size, it may be suspected that it has undergone expansion or loss through some insertion or omission. The metre thus affords additional means of arriving at the original text. Some critics have inferred that the poem was composed uniformly in couplets, and would alter the text wherever *three* lines occur in a stanza; but the instances where a third line is found are sufficiently numerous to render this conclusion doubtful.

The authorship of the psalm is definitely ascribed to David in the introduction prefixed to it in this chapter (*v.* 1) and in the title of *Ps.* xviii., and it was clearly the acceptance of this view of its origin that led the final editor of *II. Sam.* to include it here. That David was a poet is plain from the elegy on Saul and Jonathan, and according to *Amos* vi. 5, mg. he also devised musical instruments. Moreover, the ascription to him of numerous psalms in the Psalter is some presumption that he was the author of *religious* poems; and though it is certain that many of the psalms attributed to him cannot be his, yet this psalm in particular has been widely claimed for him. Various features in its contents at first sight appear to corroborate the conclusion that he wrote it. The ostensible author, who is represented as a warrior (*vv.* 30, 35), had experienced a signal deliverance from enemies who had sought his life (*vv.* 5-20), and one of these is spoken of in the singular (*v.* 49). He had been endangered not only by foreigners but (if the text is sound) by some among his own people (*v.* 44). Yet through the help of Jehovah he had overcome them all, and had obtained the ascendancy over surrounding nations (*vv.* 44, 48). To these features parallel experiences in the life of David can be traced, such as his persecution by, and escape from, Saul; his successful wars against the Philistines, Moabites, and other peoples, and the suppression of the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba. In addition, the religious tone of the poem, and its writer's humility and gratitude towards God, reproduce qualities which characterized the historic David as he is portrayed in *II. Sam.* (*cp.* vi. 21-22). There are, however, certain other features in it which are not easily harmonized with David's authorship. (a) There is a marked absence of *definite* allusions to contemporary events and circumstances (such as are apparent in an authentic poem by David like the elegy over Saul and Jonathan, and have place also in another early production, the song of Deborah: *Jud.* v.). It seems, for instance, unlikely that David would have avoided mentioning by name some, at least, of such different enemies as the Philistines, the Syrians, and the Ammonites; whereas here all the writer's foes are blended indiscriminately together. (b) In *v.* 49 and other passages which are thought to refer to Saul, the tone of the references is very dissimilar to that of the elegy, from which bitterness towards Saul is altogether absent. (c) The emphasis laid upon the observance of Jehovah's *judgments* and *statutes* (*v.* 23) raises a suspicion that the writer was acquainted with *Deut.*, a book which was probably written in the seventh century,¹

¹ See Driver, *Dt.* pp. xliv-xlviii.

and of which these terms are characteristic. (*d*) The monotheistic faith expressed in *v.* 32 was not (so far as can be judged) definitely reached until the eighth century at the earliest, some 200 years after David's time, and the phraseology resembles that of *Isaiah* xl.-lv. (sixth century).¹ Some of these difficulties in the way of accepting the psalm as David's can be met by regarding the verses in which they occur as later insertions (as is done by Briggs (*Psalms*, I. pp. 145-6), who omits *vv.* 21-28). But these omissions do not remove all the difficulties; and in many ways the language of the psalm seems best explained by the supposition that the writer speaks *for the nation*, which has behind it the experience of the Exile and of the Return. On the other hand, it may be urged that since the deliverance from the Exile was not achieved by any effort on the part of Israel itself, and since Israel had no military power after the Return, the warlike note so conspicuous in the psalm makes the origin here suggested unsuitable. In point of fact, however, the prophets and poets of the Exile and later periods did not altogether refrain from martial language (see *Isa.* xli. 15 (where *the mountains and hills* are probably metaphors for enemies), *Ps.* cxlix. 6-9). The circumstance that the psalm appears in *II. Sam.* is not a serious obstacle to a post-Exilic date, for it is obviously among the latest additions to this book, since it, together with the other poem in xxxiii. 1-7, breaks the connection between xxi. 15-22 and xxiii. 8-29; and these sections themselves have been inserted by a late editor between xxi. 1-14 and xxiv., which naturally go together. But though the origin of the psalm can most plausibly be attributed to the post-Exilic period, there is nothing in it that favours the view of some scholars that it was written as late as the Maccabean age. On the reference to David in *v.* 51 see note.

Several *vv.* of the psalm are reproduced in *Ps.* cxliv. 1-11.

1¹ **A**ND David spake unto the LORD the words
of this song in the day that the LORD delivered
him out of the hand of all his enemies, and
2 out of the hand of Saul: And he said,
The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my
deliverer, even mine;

¹ See
Ps. xviii.

1. This *v.* in the Psalter is prefixed to *Ps.* xviii. as a title.

This song. The same word is used of the triumph-song in *Ex.* xv. and of the poem in *Deut.* xxxii. (see xxxi. 19, 30).

The hand of Saul. In *Ps.* xviii. a different word is used for *hand* for the sake of variety.

2. *Ps.* xviii. begins with an additional clause, *I love thee, Jehovah, my strength.*

My rock and my fortress. Better, *my crag and my stronghold.* The Heb. word rendered by the R.V. *rock* is not the same as that used in the next *v.* The metaphors are taken from the refuges to which men had recourse in times of stress (*I.* xiii. 6, *Judges* vi. 2). By those who believe the psalm to be David's they are brought into connection with the places where he sought shelter from Saul and other enemies (*I.* xxiii. 25,

¹ See *Isaiah* (in the "Westminster" Commentaries), pp. 1, li.

¹ Heb.
Belial.
² See Gen.
xxxvii. 35.

- 3 The God of my rock, in him will I trust ;
My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my
high tower, and my refuge ;
My saviour, thou savest me from violence.
4 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be
praised ;
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.
5 For the waves of death compassed me,
The floods of 'ungodliness made me afraid.
6 The cords of ²Sheol were round about me :
The snares of death came upon me.

xxii. 4, xxiv. 22 ; II. v. 17). The LXX. here renders *crag* literally (πέτρα) ; but commonly, when this, or its synonym *rock*, is used of God, it employs from motives of reverence paraphrases like φύλαξ (vv. 3, 47), κτίστης (v. 32), or Θεός (Deut. xxxii. 18).

And my deliverer, even mine. The line in the Heb. is too long for a trimeter, and these words are perhaps the addition of a copyist. The last words, *even mine*, are absent from Ps. xviii. 2.

3. *The God . . . trust.* Ps. xviii. 2 has preferably *my God is my Rock, in whom I will trust.* The term *Rock* is a frequent title of Jehovah (I. ii. 2, Deut. xxxii. 4, 30), and is said to be also employed as a title of the Assyrian gods Asshur and Bel (cp. perhaps Isa. xxxi. 9).

The horn of my salvation. This metaphor (borrowed from the wild ox or other horned animal) describes God, as the source of victory in offensive warfare (cp. I. Kings xxii. 11) as the preceding metaphor of the *shield* describes Him as affording security in defence.

My high tower. Better, *my high retreat* (cp. Ps. xlv. 7, mg., lix. 9, etc.).

And my refuge. This is absent from Ps. xviii. and is doubtless an insertion: it makes the line too long.

My saviour . . . violence. This line does not appear in Ps. xviii., but it is needed to complete the couplet.

I will call . . . shall be saved. Better, *I call . . . am saved.*

5. *For the waves.* Ps. xviii. has *The cords* (omitting *For*), an accidental substitution of the word that occurs in v. 6.

Floods of ungodliness. Literally, *torrents of worthlessness or depravity* (Heb. Belial, see p. 168) ; but the last word, in view of the parallel clause, seems here to have the secondary sense of "destructiveness" or "ruin" (cp. Nah. i. 11, 15, Ps. xli. 8). For the use of metaphors from flooding waters to describe peril from enemies or other sources of danger cp. vv. 17, 18, Ps. xxxii. 6, lxvi. 12, lxix. 1. Such figures of speech were natural in a land where wayfarers were liable to be imperilled by sudden freshets in the torrent valleys.

The cords of Sheol. Better, *the nooses of Sheol.* The figure is taken from a hunter's nets (cp. Ps. xci. 3). The word rendered *cords* can also mean *pangs*, and this, though obviously unsuitable here, is found in the similar passage Ps. cxvi. 3 (cp. Acts ii. 24). For *Sheol* see on xii. 23

- 7 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
Yea, I called unto my God :
And he heard my voice out of his temple,
And my cry *came* into his ears.
- 8 Then the earth shook and trembled,
The foundations of heaven moved
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
- 9 There went up a smoke ¹out of his nostrils.
And fire out of his mouth devoured :
Coals were kindled by it.
- 10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down ;
And thick darkness was under his feet.
- 11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly :

¹ Or, in
his wrath.

7. *Called . . . called.* The LXX. here and the Heb. of *Ps.* xviii. 6 have two different verbs, *called . . . cried*, probably correctly.

His temple. I.e. His heavenly temple (or *palace*) : cp. *Ps.* xi. 4, xxix. 9.

And my cry came into his ears. *Ps.* xviii. has *and my cry before him comes into his ears*. This is too long, and the true text is possibly *and my cry before him was in his ears*.

8. This and the following verses describe a theophany, when Jehovah intervened to rescue His servant in answer to his appeal. The poet imagines God as descending from heaven, accompanied by storm and earthquake. Divine interventions in the history of Israel are depicted under similar imagery in I. ii. 10, *Judges* v. 4, 5, *Ps.* lxviii. 7, 8, lxxvii. 15-18, *Isa.* xxix. 6, xxx. 27-30, *Hab.* iii. 3 f. Such imagery was the more natural from the fact that thunderstorms had sometimes in the past contributed to Israelite victories (see I. vii. 10, *Joshua* x. 11).

The foundations of heaven. *Ps.* xviii. 7 has *the foundations of the mountains*, but the text here is to be preferred as the harder reading. Heaven was conceived as a solid vault resting at its edges upon the mountains, which could be regarded as its foundations.

9. *A smoke.* A natural figure for the fierce and rapid breathing of anger (cp. the verb in *Ps.* lxxiv. 1, and *Hom. Il.* xviii. 108-110, *χόλος . . . ἀέξεται ἥντε καπνός*).

Coals. I.e. charcoal (see on xiv. 7) ; but as the Heb. properly means *hot*, or *glowing*, charcoal (see *Ps.* cxi. 10, *burning coals*), it must be here used proleptically. The conception is that of forests or brushwood set on fire by lightning.

10. *He bowed the heavens.* The lowering storm clouds are here thought of as sinking under Jehovah as He descends upon them from heaven to earth.

11. *A cherub.* The parallel clause suggests that a cherub originally represented a storm wind, which bore along the clouds forming Jehovah's chariot (cp. *Ps.* civ. 3). In *Gen.* iii. 24 cherubim are the sentinels placed to guard the garden of Eden from profanation after Adam's fall ; but the original conception even there is suggested by *the flame of a sword* turning every way (which seems to describe lightning). In the inmost sanctuary of the Tabernacle and Temple cherubs were represented as

- | | |
|----|--|
| | Yea, he was seen upon the wings of the wind. |
| 12 | And he made darkness pavilions round about him,
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies. |
| 13 | At the brightness before him
Coals of fire were kindled. |
| 14 | The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered his voice. |
| 15 | And he sent out arrows, and scattered them;
Lightning and discomfited them. |

gigantic winged figures (perhaps resembling those that appear on the Assyrian monuments as fertilizing, like the wind, the date palm). In *Ezek.* ch. i., x. they are depicted as animated creatures, each having four faces (see p. 116), and together constituting God's living chariot. As compared with this, the conception in the text seems to follow primitive lines. A Rabbinical explanation of the word *cherub* as equivalent to the late Heb. *c'râbi*, "like a growing child," seems to be the origin of the representation in art of cherubs as innocent children (cp. W. F. Cobb, *Psalms*, p. 47).

Was seen. *Ps.* xviii. 10 has *flew swiftly* (or *swooped*, cp. *Deut.* xxviii. 49, *Jer.* xlvi. 40), which, as being the rarer word, is probably correct and misread as *γ* occasioning the reading here.

12-13. The text of these *vv.* varies from that of *Ps.* xviii. 11-12, which, as it stands in the Heb. Bible is, *He made darkness His hiding place, round about Him His pavilion, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies; Because of the brightness* (or *without brightness*) *before Him His thick clouds passed, Hailstones and coals of fire.* This is probably nearer to the original than the text of *Sam.*, but it seems to contain one gloss (*His hiding place*) which is absent from the Heb. here (though recognized by the LXX.), and to be wrongly divided. If re-arranged, it will run:

12. *And He made darkness round about Him,
His pavilion of darkness of waters,
Thick clouds of the skies without brightness;*
13. *Before Him passed His thick clouds,
Hailstones and coals of fire.*

The preference for *darkness of waters* over *gathering of waters* is supported by the LXX. here, which has *σκότος ὑδάτων*, the *waters* being those collected in the dark storm-clouds. The variation is due to a confusion of *ב* with *ו*. The shorter text which *Sam.* presents seems to have arisen through the omission of certain words closely resembling one another, whilst the verb *kindled* has resulted from the transposition of the consonants in the verb *passed*. For the clouds as God's pavilion cp. *Job* xxxvi. 29.

14. *From heaven.* *Ps.* xviii. 13 has *in heaven* (a confusion of *ב* and *בָּ*).

The Most High. Heb. *Elyon*; cp. *Gen.* xiv. 18, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. The same Divine title was in use among the Phœnicians.

His voice. For the thunder as God's voice see *I.* vii. 10 mg., *Ps.* xxix. 3, *Is.* xxx. 30, *Ex.* xix. 16 (where *thunders* is literally *voices*): cp. also *John* xii. 28, 29.

15. *Lightning, and discomfited them.* The line here is too short. *Ps.*

- 16 Then the channels of the sea appeared,
The foundations of the world were laid bare,
By the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
- 17 He sent from on high, he took me ;
He drew me out of ¹many waters ;
- 18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From them that hated me ; for they were too
mighty for me.
- 19 They came upon me in the day of my calamity :
But the LORD was my stay.
- 20 He brought me forth also into a large place :
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteous-
ness :
According to the cleanness of my hands hath
he recompensed me.
- 22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.

¹ Or, *reat*.

xviii. 14 after *lightnings* adds *manifold*, which supplies the deficiency ; but possibly the word rendered *manifold* has lost a letter, and the true reading may be *he shot forth lightning* (the suggested verb occurring in *Gen.* xxi. 20). The word translated to *discomfit* also means to *make a noise* ; and the Heb. mg. seems to take it in this sense : if this is right, the verse should perhaps be rendered, *He sent out arrows and scattered them* (the arrows) ; *he shot forth lightning and made a rumbling*. The arrows are the flashes of lightning.

16. *Of the sea.* Ps. xviii. 15 reads *of waters* (the text here has probably lost a letter). The thought in the writer's mind is that of an earthquake causing a tidal wave that exposed the ocean bed.

By the rebuke . . . of his nostrils. Ps. xviii. 15 has *at thy rebuke, O Jehovah . . . of thy nostrils*.

17. *Sent.* Better, *reached forth*, literally "stretched forth" (his hand) ; cp. Ps. cxliv. 7.

18. *My strong enemy.* Those who ascribe the psalm to David refer this to Saul (cp. v. 49) ; but the parallel line suggests that the word is used collectively, and in Ps. xviii. 17 the LXX. has the plural: *ῥύσεται ἐξ ἐχθρῶν μου θυγατρὶν*.

20. *A large place.* In contrast to the previous straits: cp. Ps. xxxi. 8, *Job* xxxvi. 16.

21. *My righteousness.* If the psalm proceeds from David, the claim here made may be illustrated by I. xxvi. 23, I. *Kings* xi. 4, xiv. 8, xv. 5. But righteousness is claimed for Israel as a people (in contrast with the heathen world) in *Num.* xxiii. 10, *Is.* xxiv. 16, xxvi. 2, 7, *Hab.* i. 4, 13, ii. 4, and (if the Lord's servant of *Is.* liii. represents Israel) *Is.* liii. 11 : see also p. 83.

22. *The ways of the LORD.* This is an expression frequent in *Deut.* (viii. 6, x. 12, xi. 22, etc.).

¹ So Ps. xviii. 26. The text has, <i>unsavoury</i>. ² Or, <i>whom thou wilt bring down</i>.	23	For all his judgments were before me : And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.
	24	I was also perfect toward him, And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
	25	Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness ; According to my cleanness in his eyesight.
	26	With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful. With the perfect man thou wilt shew thyself perfect ;
	27	With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure ; And with the perverse thou wilt shew thyself ¹ froward.
	28	And the afflicted people thou wilt save : But thine eyes are upon the haughty, ² that thou mayest bring them down.

23. *Judgments . . . statutes . . . depart*. These terms are also characteristic of *Deut.* (Driver, *Dt.* pp. lxxxii, lxxxiii.). Instead of the text here *Ps. xviii. 22* has *I put not away his statutes from me*.

24. *I was perfect toward him*. This recalls the command in *Deut. xviii. 13*.

From mine iniquity. I.e. from iniquity, so that it did not become mine (the expression being proleptic).

25. This verse substantially repeats *v. 21*, and the resemblance is even closer in *Ps. xviii. 24* which for *my cleanness* has *the cleanness of my hands*.

26-27. The law of retributive justice here enunciated is proclaimed even in the N.T.: see *Matt. vi. 15*, *xviii. 35*, *Luke vi. 38*, *James ii. 13*. By the pronoun *thou* is meant God.

Merciful. Or kindly. The Heb. word describes the man who shows duteous love both to his fellow men and to God; but in later Jewish history it came to be used in particular of those who piously observed the Law (in contrast to those who adopted heathen customs), and who were known as *Hasideans*, "the pious" (*I. Macc. ii. 42*). The same term was sometimes used of God as just and gracious (*Ps. cxlv. 17, gracious*), and the corresponding verb is similarly employed here. So in Latin *pietas*, which ordinarily connotes human dutifulness, is attributed to God in *Verg. A. ii. 536, si qua est cælo pietas*, and in *Statius, S. iii. 3, 1, summa deum pietas*.

27. *Froward. Or tortuous*. The writer thinks of God as repaying offenders in their own coin: cp. *Job xxxiv. 11*. The text here (see mg.) makes no sense.

28. *The afflicted people. Or the humbled people*: cp. *Zeph. iii. 12*.
But thine eyes . . . down. *Ps. xviii. 27* has *But the haughty eyes thou wilt bring down*, LXX. ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑπερηφάνους ταπεινώσεις. It may be suggested that the true reading is, *But the eyes of all haughty (or lofty) ones thou wilt bring down* (two words being divided differently and one letter omitted).

If the psalm is really Davidic, the reflective character of *vv. 21-28*, as contrasted with the stirring tone of the rest of the poem, favours the view that they are a later insertion.

- 29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD :
And the LORD will lighten my darkness.
- 30 For by thee I run ¹upon a troop :
By my God do I leap over a wall.
- 31 As for God, his way is perfect :
The word of the LORD is tried ;
He is a shield unto all them that trust in him.
- 32 For who is God, save the LORD ?
And who is a rock, save our God ?
- 33 God is my strong fortress.
And he ²guideth the perfect in his way.

¹ Or,
through.

² Or, setteth
free. Ac-
cording to
another
reading,
guideth my
way in
perfectness.

29. *My lamp.* I.e. a source of illumination and guidance in gloomy times. Ps. xviii. 28 has *For thou wilt light my lamp*, which is less vigorous than the text here.

And the LORD. Ps. xviii. 28 has *Jehovah my God*. This makes the line too long, and the original reading was probably *My God*.

30. *Run upon.* I.e. charge. But the construction in the original is unusual, and with different vowel points the verb means *break*.

A troop. I.e. of marauders (the same word as that used of the Amalekite raiders in I. xxx. 8, 15). But the emendation mentioned in the preceding note suggests the substitution of *a fence* here, and this is favoured by LXX. Luc. and by the parallel line. There has probably been a confusion of 7 and 7.

Leap over a wall. I.e. scale a fortification. By those who attribute the poem to David, it is suggested that this refers to the capture of Jerusalem (v. 6-10).

31. *His way is perfect.* Cp. Deut. xxxii. 4.

Tried. Better, *sterling*, like refined silver (cp. Ps. xii. 6). The last two lines of this v. recur in Prov. xxx. 5.

32. Both the sentiment and the diction of this v. is more suited to a late period than to the age of David. The monotheistic belief expressed in it contrasts strikingly with the language of David's contemporaries in I. xxvi. 19, and the Heb. phraseology resembles that of Is. xlv. 6, 8, xlv. 21. It is true that the same belief that Jehovah alone is God appears in vii. 22, but this chapter is of late date (see p. 121). It also occurs in the "Song of Hannah" (I. ii. 2), but this cannot well be the composition of Hannah; "it is not early in style and seems unsuited to Hannah's position" (Driver).

33. *God is my strong fortress.* Ps. xviii. 32 has *The God that girdeth me with strength*. The parallel clause decides in favour of this latter reading, which here is supported by LXX. Luc. and Vulg., but in the Heb. has been corrupted by the confusion and loss of some letters in one word.

Guideth the perfect in his way. The Heb. here is very obscure and is probably a corruption of the original preserved in Ps. xviii. 32, *maketh my way perfect*.

¹ Another reading is, *my*.

² Or, *condescension*.

³ Heb. *ankles*.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 34 | He maketh ¹ his feet like hinds' feet :
And setteth me upon my high places. |
| 35 | He teacheth my hands to war ;
So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass. |
| 36 | Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation :
And thy ² gentleness hath made me great. |
| 37 | Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
And my ³ feet have not slipped. |
| 38 | I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them ;
Neither did I turn again till they were consumed. |
| 39 | And I have consumed them, and smitten them
through, that they cannot arise ;
Yea, they are fallen under my feet, |

34. *His feet*. This, the reading of the Heb. text, should be replaced by the Heb. *mg. my feet* (as in *Ps.* xviii. 33) : note *me* in the next line.

Like hinds' feet. The simile is meant to illustrate the psalmist's activity and speed : cp. *Gen.* xlix. 21, *Is.* xxxv. 6, *Hab.* iii. 19, and see above, ii. 18. For the compendious comparison (*like hinds*), cp. *Hom.* *Il.* xvii. 51, κόμαι χαλτρεσσιν ὁμοίαι.

Setteth me. Better, *maketh me stand*, i.e. enables me to hold my ground : cp. *Amos* ii. 15, *Judges* ii. 14.

My high places. I.e. the mountain strongholds and other points of vantage in the country : cp. i. 19, 25, *Deut.* xxxii. 13, xxxiii. 29. The passage is imitated in *Hab.* iii. 19.

35. *So that . . . a bow of brass*. There is no substantial difference here between the two Heb. texts, but the LXX. of *Ps.* xviii. 34 has ἔθου τόξον χαλκοῦν τοὺς βραχίονάς μου, and the Vulg. has here *componens quasi arcum æreum brachia mea*, and in *Ps.* xviii. 34 *et posuisti ut arcum æreum brachia mea*, so that it has been proposed to read *Thou hast made mine arms a bow of brass* (or *bronze*)—a vigorous metaphor. That bows made more or less of bronze were in use appears from *Job* xx. 24.

36. *Thy gentleness*. This is a rendering of the word employed in *Ps.* xviii. 35, which is inappropriate to the context. The text here has *thy answering* (ἡ ὑπακοή σου), i.e. Thy responsiveness to my appeals. But LXX. *Luc.* here and the LXX. and Vulg. in *Ps.* xviii. have ἡ παιδεία σου and *disciplina tua* (different vowel points), i.e. Thy instruction or training of me. In *Ps.* xviii. the LXX. at the end of the *v.* adds *for ever*, which improves the metre.

37. *Enlarged my steps*. I.e. freed my course from obstruction ; cp. *v.* 20 and contrast *Job* xviii. 7.

38. *Destroyed them*. *Ps.* xviii. 37 has *overtaken them*, each variant being supported by the corresponding LXX.

39. *And I have consumed them*. This, which is absent from *Ps.* xviii. 38, makes the line too long and is probably an interpolation. The *v.* should begin with *And I have smitten them*, etc.

40	For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle :	
	Thou hast 'subdued under me those that rose up 'against me.	¹ Heb. caused to bow.
41	Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me,	
	That I might cut off them that hate me.	
42	They looked, but there was none to save ;	
	Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.	
43	Then did I beat them small as the dust of the earth,	
	I did stamp them as the mire of the streets, and did spread them abroad.	
44	Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people ;	
	Thou ² hast kept me to be the head of the nations :	² Or, will keep.

40. *Girded me with strength.* For the figure of speech cp. *Isa.* xi. 5, lix. 17, lxi. 10, *Ps.* lxxi. 13, and *Hom., Il.* xx. 381, εἰμένος ἀλκήν, *Tac., Ann.* xi. 7, *magnum animum induisse.*

42. *They looked.* I.e. for help. *Ps.* xviii. 41 has *they cried* (a confusion of ' and 1). The parallel clause, and the LXX. in both texts, decide for the latter reading.

Unto the LORD. This, as implying that the enemies were not heathen, at first sight favours Davidic authorship (the allusion being to rebels). But it perhaps means that the fugitives, since their own god could not save them, appealed for mercy to the God of their pursuers.

43. *As the dust of the earth.* A figure for complete annihilation (cp. *II. Kings* xiii. 7). *Ps.* xviii. 42 has *As the dust before the wind*, which makes too long a line, and is perhaps due to assimilation with *Ps.* xxxv. 5, lxxxiii. 13.

I did stamp them. *Ps.* xviii. 42 has *I did cast them out*, but the LXX. there has *λεανῶ αὐτούς*, which decides in favour of the reading here. The variant is due to a confusion of 1 and 7.

And did spread them abroad. This does not occur in *Ps.* xviii., and makes the line unduly long. The word, which means "to spread out by beating," looks like a gloss to explain the effect of stamping mire.

44. *My people.* This has been taken to refer to the civil disturbances of David's reign (ch. xv.-xx). But the parallel clause and the LXX. λαὸν suggest that a letter has been lost and that the true reading is *peoples*. (In *Ps.* cxliv. 2, derived from v. 47 of this psalm, *my people* is clearly a corruption of *peoples*.) *Ps.* xviii. 43 has *the people* (LXX. λαοῦ). This line seems to have lost its parallel, and it has been suggested that the missing line is the second of the three lines in v. 49, which would be improved by its removal.

Thou hast kept me. *Ps.* xviii. 43 has *Thou hast made me*, which is more appropriate, since it is not the maintenance, but the acquisition, of sovereignty that is in the writer's mind.

The head of the nations. This, whilst intelligible as a hypobolical

¹ Or, *yield feigned obedience*, Heb. *lie*.

² So Ps. xviii. 45. The text has, *gird themselves*.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 45 | A people whom I have not known shall serve me.
The strangers shall submit themselves unto me ;
As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me. |
| 46 | The strangers shall fade away.
And shall ² come trembling out of their close places. |
| 47 | The LORD liveth : and blessed be my rock ;
And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation : |
| 48 | Even the God that executeth vengeance for me,
And bringeth down peoples under me, |
| 49 | And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies :
Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me : |
| 50 | Thou deliverest me from the violent man.
Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD,
among the nations, |

description of David's conquests (viii. 1-14), is not less intelligible, if understood of Israel's latter-day hopes. The actual phrase is used of Israel in *Jer.* xxxi. 7.

A people whom I have not known, etc. This seems less appropriate in the mouth of David than in that of Israel, which expected eventually to enjoy rule over *distant* peoples (cp. *Isa.* lv. 5, lxvi. 19).

45. *Shall submit themselves*. Better, *shall cringe*, i.e. shall yield humble but insincere submission in consequence of their defeat (cp. *Ps.* lxvi. 3 mg., lxxxix. 15).

As soon as they hear. I.e. the formidable reputation of the psalmist will suffice to induce submission. Advocates of the Davidic authorship illustrate this by the action of the king of Hamath (viii. 9 foll.). In *Ps.* xviii. the two parts of this *v.* appear in the reverse order, and this arrangement is supported by *LXX. Luc.* here.

46. *The strangers . . . away*. I.e. foreign nations will despair of successful resistance, and will surrender unconditionally. But for *shall fade away* the parallelism favours the emendation *shall be brought to me*.

Come trembling. This is the rendering of the verb in *Ps.* xviii. 45 : in the text here two letters have been transposed, resulting in nonsense.

Their close places. Better, *their fastnesses* (cp. *Micah* vii. 17).

47. *The God of the rock of my salvation*. The word *rock*, absent from *Ps.* xviii. 46, seems to have been accidentally introduced from the previous line. The true reading is *The God of my salvation*.

48. *Bringeth down*. *Ps.* xviii. 47 has *subdueth* (a late word occurring again in xlvii. 3).

49. *Bringeth me forth*. *Ps.* xviii. 48 has *rescueth me*, and the *LXX.* there, instead of *my enemies*, has *wrathful enemies*.

Yea, thou liftest me . . . against me. See note on *v.* 44.

The violent man. This is taken by many to refer to Saul, but the singular may be used collectively or typically (cp. *Ps.* cxi. 1, 2).

50. *Among the nations*. This seems more appropriate to personified Israel than to an individual like David.

And will sing praises unto thy name.

- 51 ¹Great ²deliverance giveth he to his king :
And sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed.
To David and to his seed, for evermore.

¹ Another reading is, *He is a tower of deliverance.*
² Heb. *salvations.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

This chapter is of heterogeneous contents, a second poetical composition credited to David being placed next to the psalm in xxii. and followed by a second passage relating to David's warriors. The latter section (vv. 8-39) should clearly have been continuous with xxi. 15-22.

vv. 1-7. "*David's last words.*"

This poem, unlike the previous psalm (xxii.) is asserted to be David's, not only in the introductory title, but in the body of the composition. It is too brief to afford many indications of the real time of its production ; but it contains at least one expression which is common in Aramaic, and within the O.T. is confined almost exclusively to the book of Job, a work of comparatively late date ("it belongs most probably to the century which began with the return from Babylon" in B.C. 537 : Driver). This suggests that the poem was composed long after David's age, and that the description of it as being his "*Last Words*" is merely a literary device. The "*Blessing of Moses*" (Deut. xxxiii.), wherewith he "blessed the children of Israel before his death" is similarly of later origin than the Mosaic age (see vv. 4, 27, 28, and cp. Driver, *Dt.* p. 386 f., *LOT.* p. 91), and the "*Blessing of Jacob*" (Gen. xlix. 2-27), which in its present context seems meant to be understood as a parting utterance by the patriarch, is also of a date subsequent to the patriarchal age (see v. 7, and cp. Driver, *Gen.* p. 380).

The poem describes the influence upon a land of the virtues of righteousness and piety in its ruler, and reaffirms God's

51. *Great deliverance giveth he*, etc. This is the reading of the Heb. text both here and in Ps. xviii. 50 ; but the Heb. mg. here has *A tower of deliverance is he*. The difference is no more than that between ' and 1. This v., if an integral part of the psalm, is unsuitable in the mouth of David, who, after the uniform use of the first person elsewhere, would scarcely refer to himself here as *David* (in the third person). But since early psalms were liable to be adapted to the needs of later times by additions, it cannot be regarded confidently as a portion of the original composition. On the supposition, however, that the psalm is of later date than David's time, there is no need to sever it from its context. The allusions in *king*, *anointed*, *David*, are not inconsistent even with a date after the fall of the last of the Hebrew kingdoms, for the restoration of David's dynasty was a cherished hope in post-Exilic times (see *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25, *Isa.* lv. 3) ; and the verbs here may be equivalent to futures.

promise of permanence to David's house, contrasting with it the destiny of the ungodly.

- 1 **N**OW these be the last words of David.
 David the son of Jesse saith,
 And the man who was raised on high saith,
 The anointed of the God of Jacob.
 And ¹the sweet psalmist of Israel :
 2 The spirit of the LORD spake ²by me,
 And his word was upon my tongue.
 3 The God of Israel said,
 The Rock of Israel spake to me :
³One that ruleth over men ⁴righteously,
 That ruleth in the fear of God,
 4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning, when
 the sun riseth,
 A morning without clouds ;
 When the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,
 Through clear shining after rain.
 5 ⁵Verily my house is not so with God ;

¹ Heb.
*pleasant in
 the psalms
 of Israel.*

² Or, *in.*
³ Or, *There
 shall be one
 . . . and it
 shall be
 as &c.*

⁴ Heb. *a
 righteous one.*

⁵ Or, *For is
 not my house
 so with God?
 for he . . .
 for all my
 salvation,
 and all my
 desire, will
 he not make
 it to grow?*

1. The opening *v.* recalls the oracles of Balaam in *Num.* xxiv. 3, 4, 15, 16.

David . . . saith. Better, *Utterance of David . . . Utterance of the man*, etc. The expression is generally used of the oracles of Jehovah (as in *Isa.* xxx. 1, *Micah* iv. 6, etc.), but is employed, as here, of a human speaker in *Num.* xxiv. 3, 4, 15, 16, *Prov.* xxx. 1.

Raised on high. An allusion to David's elevation from a humble position to a royal throne (see I. xvi. 11-13, and cp. II. vi. 21).

The sweet psalmist of Israel. The original has been taken in two ways, (1) *Israel's sweet singer of songs*, (2) *The Darling* (i.e. the favourite subject) of *Israel's songs*.

2. *His word.* The original "is properly an Aramaic word, in Heb. used only in poetry, *Ps.* xix. 5, cxxxix. 4, *Prov.* xxiii. 9, and 34 times in *Job*" (Driver).

3. *The God of Israel.* LXX. *Luc.* has preferably *The God of Jacob*.

The Rock of Israel. The phrase recurs in *Isa.* xxx. 29 (see on xxii. 3).

4. *When the tender grass*, etc. The growth of verdure under the successive influences of rain and sunshine is used to illustrate the beneficent effects of a righteous rule. The Heb. is very defective, and the real sense is uncertain.

Through clear shining after rain. The Heb. preposition, which is the same before both nouns, is ambiguous, and the sense may possibly be *through sunshine*, *through rain*. In a dry country like Palestine, the effect of rain upon vegetation is more noticeable than that of the sun's heat (cp. *Ps.* lxxii. 6).

5. *Verily my house is not so.* The required sense can only be obtained by taking the sentence interrogatively as in the mg., *For is not my*

Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, Ordered in all things, and sure : For it is all my salvation, and all <i>my</i> desire, Although he maketh it not to grow. 6 But 'the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away, For they cannot be taken with the hand : 7 But the man that toucheth them Must be ²armed with iron and the staff of a spear ; And they shall be utterly burned with fire in <i>their</i> place.	¹ Heb. <i>Belial</i>, that is, <i>worthlessness</i>. ² Heb. <i>filled</i>.
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house so with God? The word *so* refers to the righteous ruler and the blessings he bestows, as described in *vv.* 3 and 4.

Yet. Better, For. The *everlasting covenant* refers to the promise in *vii.* 12, f. A covenant was ordinarily a mutual compact between two parties, which was liable to come to an end with the failure of one or both to fulfil the stipulated conditions. But into the notion of a covenant between man and God there entered ideas based upon the Divine character, so that even if man did not perform his part, it was expected that God's faithfulness would not allow Him to be altogether false to His pledge, though its fulfilment might be other than that originally contemplated (cp. *Ps.* lxxxix. 33, 34, *Jer.* xxxiii. 20, 21, *Isa.* lv. 3, and see *Acts* xiii. 34).

For it is all, etc. The negative in the second line must be understood as a question expecting an affirmative answer (cp. the mg.). *For all my salvation* (or *well-being*) *and all my desire, doth He not make it to grow?*

6. *But the ungodly, etc.* Literally, *But worthlessness* (Heb. *Belial*)—*like thorns tossed away are they all, for they are not taken with the hand.*

7. *Must be armed, etc.* Strictly, *must arm himself with iron and a spear shaft, i.e.* with an implement (such as a hayfork or rake) consisting of a long handle with an iron head.

In their place. The Heb. can scarcely mean this, the literal rendering being *in* (their) *sitting*. The word (*bashshebeth*) looks like an accidental repetition of part of the name *Josheb-bashshebeth* in *v.* 8, and should be omitted.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

HEBREW POETRY.

As *II. Samuel* includes several poems, it seems desirable to say something about such features of Hebrew poetry as find illustration in these poems, and admit of being discerned even through the medium of a translation.

The rhythm of Hebrew poetry is marked not, as in Greek and Latin, by the periodical occurrence of groups of long and short syllables, but by a definite succession of accents or beats. The lines are not rhymed, though a certain number of passages occur in which assonance between neighbouring words seems to have been aimed at by the poets. But Hebrew verse is characterized by a feature which in a measure replaces rhyme. Instead of the echoing ring which the concluding word of one

line affords to that of another when they rhyme together, there is an echo of the *sense*. Hebrew verses are usually arranged in couplets (or distichs) or in multiples of couplets (such as quatrains); and these are commonly constructed in such a way that the second line of the couplet is symmetrical with, and corresponds to, the first,¹ and reproduces, or expands, or supplies a contrast to, its signification. This symmetry of structure has more than an æsthetic value: it also contributes to elucidate the meaning, one of the clauses, if unambiguous, throwing light upon the sense of the other which, without such aid, might be doubtful.

Such parallelism is not of one uniform kind, and its three principal varieties have been styled: (a) *the synonymous*, (b) *the antithetic*, (c) *the synthetic*.

(a) In *synonymous parallelism* the sentiment conveyed by the first line of the couplet is duplicated in substantially equivalent terms, with just such variety of expression as serves to prevent it from being a mere repetition. Examples are furnished alike by David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan in ii., by the psalm contained in xxii. and by "*The Last Words of David*" in xxiii. Thus:

- (a) Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
- (β) The cords of Sheol were round about me,
The snares of death came upon me.
- (γ) The spirit of the LORD spake by me,
And his word was upon my tongue.

Conspicuous instances also occur in i. 22, 23, in xxii. 14, 15, 16, 29, 32, in xxiii. 1, and in Ps. ii. 3-5, xxxviii. 1-3, xlix. 1, xcv. 1-3, cxiv. 1-6, cxlvii. 12-20. Other examples are furnished by Gen. iv. 23, xlix. 2, 7, 11, 12.

(b) In *antithetic parallelism* the sentiment expressed in one line is balanced by its opposite in the next. This form of parallelism is less common in such kinds of poetical composition as are comprised in this book and in the Psalms generally; nevertheless illustrations are furnished by Ps. xxxvii. 17:

*The arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the LORD upholdeth the righteous.*

Other examples will be found in Ps. i. 6, xx. 7, 8, xxvii. 10, xxxiv. 19, xxxvii. 21. By its nature it is particularly suitable for conveying the sharp contrasts which find place in proverbial sayings; and consequently it can be amply illustrated from the book of *Proverbs*, e.g., xi. 1, 4, 6, xii. 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

(c) *Synthetic parallelism* does not present the same degree of symmetry as the two kinds just described; for the second line does not repeat the sentiment of the first, or contrast with it its opposite, but merely balances it more or less in point of form and construction; whilst the contents of the two may occupy to one another very various relations (such as those of a cause to its effect, a request to the reason for it, a condition to its consequence, and the like). Examples are afforded by Ps. xxi. 7, xxv. 16, lv. 6, lxxx. 12, cxxvii. 1.

¹ For a less customary arrangement see iii. 33-34 (note).

vv. 8-39. *A List of Knights and an account of the achievements of some of them.*

Lists in large measure parallel to this occur in I. Chron. xi. 11-47 and xxvii. 2-15. As might be expected, there are several differences between the names included in them, many of them being obviously due to textual errors; and, for the purpose of comparison, the lists are subjoined in an additional note (p. 221). The warriors who are here enumerated appear to be divided into two classes or Orders, (1) the "*Three*," (2) the "*Thirty*," inclusion in which could only be won by exceptional prowess in the field. The numbers *three* and *thirty* were perhaps never exceeded at any one time; but as members of the two Orders were successively removed by death, their places were filled by the promotion of others. As the names of the "*Thirty*" here given amount to rather more than thirty, probably the list comprises all whom the writer knew to have been included in the order at any period. Two certainly died before David—Asahel, who perished quite early in his reign, and Uriah. The list in I. Chron. xi. is still longer. Unfortunately, much obscurity attaches to the lists in consequence of the similarity between certain Heb. words. In Hebrew the terms for *Three*, *Thirty*, and *Captain* are easily confused; and in several places there appears to be a good deal of textual corruption.

The numbers represented as slain by certain members of these Orders (see vv. 8, 18) are comparable with those credited to Shamgar and Samson (*Jud.* iii. 31, xv. 15), and cannot be taken very seriously. Such high figures probably first found place in ballads celebrating the achievements of such champions (cp. *Jud.* xv. 16, I. Sam. xxi. 11).

vv. 8-12. "*The Three*."

8 ¹THESE be the names of the mighty men whom David had: ²Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, against eight hundred slain at one

¹ See I. Chr. xi. 11-47.

² The verse is probably corrupt. See I. Chr. xi. 11.

8. *Josheb-basshebeth*. That this name is probably corrupt is recognized in the mg. I. Chron. xi. 11 has *Jashobeam*, but the LXX. has Ἰεσοθε (which in ii. 8 stands for *Ish-bosheth*) and LXX. Luc. has Ἰεσβααλ, representing *Ishbaal*. This last was no doubt his real name, the second part of which has been purposely replaced by *bosheth* (see p. 90), and this accidentally corrupted into the form in the text.

A Tahchemonite. This should be corrected to *the Hachmonite* (cp. I. Chron. xi. 11 and the name in I. Chron. xxvii. 32).

Chief of the captains. Better (after the reading of LXX. Luc., Theod., and Vulg.), *chief of the three*.

The same was Adino the Eznite. This seems to be an unexplained corruption of words that are preserved in I. Chron. xi. 11, *he lifted up his spear* (cp. the corresponding phrase in v. 18).

Eight hundred. In I. Chron. xi. 11 *three hundred*, but this would

9 time. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodai the son of an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the
¹ Heb. *went up.* 10 men of Israel ¹were gone away: he arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great ²victory that day; and the people returned
² Heb. *salvation.* 11 after him only to spoil. And after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together ³into a troop, where was a plot of ground full of lentils; and the people
³ Or, *for foraging.* 12 fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD wrought a great ²victory.

vv. 13-17a. A chivalrous exploit of three of the Thirty.

The three here mentioned are not the three named in *vv.* 8, 9, 11, but another three of less renown, who were members of the Thirty (*vv.* 24-39), but whose identity cannot

make the feat here recorded in no way superior to that of Abishai (*v.* 18), who was not included in the Three.

9. *Dodai.* The Heb. mg. and I. *Chron.* xi. 12 have *Dodo* (a form occurring also in *Jud.* x. 1).

The son of an Ahohite. Better (after the text of I. *Chron.* xi. 12), *the Ahohite*, i.e., belonging to Ahoah, a Benjamite clan (I. *Chron.* viii. 4).

With David. The text should be emended (after I. *Chron.* xi. 13) to *He was with David.*

When they defied the Philistines that. This seems to be a corruption of *at Pas-dammim*, and *the Philistines* (as in I. *Chron.* xi. 13). The name of a place is needed to explain the *there* which follows.

And the men of Israel were gone away. These words should be included in *v.* 10 and rendered *And when the men of Israel withdrew* (literally *went up*, cp. II. *Kings* xii. 18), *he arose*, etc. Eleazar turned a rout into a victory (cp. Josephus, *Ant.* vii. 12, § 4).

10. *Clave unto the sword.* I.e. through the muscles becoming stiff.

11. *Into a troop.* The word (not the same as that in iii. 22, iv. 2, xxii. 30) recurs in *v.* 13, but the following *where* implies that a place-name preceded; and as LXX. *Luc.* has ἐν σιαγόνα ("to a jaw-bone"), it is clear that the true reading is *to Lehi* (see *Judges* xv. 17, 19, mg.). The difference is only in the vowel points. Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 12, 4) also has *Lehi*. The place-name means "jaw" or "jawbone."

Full of lentils. I. *Chron.* xi. 13, where there is a confusion between Shammah's exploit and Eleazar's, substitutes *full of barley*. The Philistines had apparently designed to carry off the crops.

12. *Stood.* I.e. stood at bay.

be ascertained. The present passage is misplaced here, and should probably follow *v.* 39.

- 13 **A**ND three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines
 14 were encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the garrison of the
 15 Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the
 16 gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.
 17 And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this; *shall I drink* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

¹ Heb. *with their lives.*

13. *Three of the thirty chief.* This is the reading of the Heb. mg., but the word *chief*, absent from the LXX., should be omitted.

In the harvest time. Better (after LXX. *Luc.* and I. *Chron.* xi. 15), *to the rock*, in which the cave was situated (cp. on *v.* 17). The text here is due to a confusion of *ו* and *ב* and the accidental addition of a letter to the original reading.

The troop. Better, *a community*, i.e. a group of families: it is the same word as that rendered *congregation* in *Ps.* lxxviii. 10. But I. *Chron.* xi. 15 has *the host* (or *camp*).

In the valley of Rephaim. See *v.* 18. The incident perhaps happened on the occasion there related.

14. *The hold.* I.e. Adullam (see I. xxii. 1 and 4).

15. *The well of Beth-lehem.* David was suffering from thirst and homesickness. The probable site is a well to the S. of Bethlehem; but the *traditional* site is an artificial cistern NW. of the village. The Heb. mg. has *cistern* here. Bethlehem was five miles S. of Jerusalem.

16. *Poured it out.* David treated the water, procured at the risk of his soldiers' lives, as equivalent to blood, which he was required to offer unto Jehovah (cp. I. xiv. 33). The exploit was a fine achievement finely appreciated.

17. *Be it . . . O LORD.* The true text is probably preserved in LXX. *Luc.*, *Jehovah forbid* (as in I. xxvi. 11). The words *shall I drink*, rightly supplied by the R.V., occur in the LXX.

In jeopardy of. Literally, *at the cost of* (cp. *Num.* xvi. 38, mg.).

These things . . . men. This clause would be placed more suitably after *v.* 12, since the three meant are those named in *vv.* 8-12,

vv. 18-23. *The Exploits of Abishai and Benaiah.*

18 **A**ND Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred ¹and slew them, and had a name among the three. Was he not most honourable of the three? therefore he was made their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of ²a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he slew the two *sons* of Ariel of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and

¹ Heb. slain.

² According to another reading, *Ish-hai*.

18. *The three.* This is the reading of the Heb. mg., but the true reading is doubtless *the thirty* which occurs in the Syr., and was originally in the Heb. text (which has lost the final letter). Abishai's achievement entitled him to be captain of the Thirty, but was not equal to that of Ishbaal (v. 8).

Among the three. Better (after the emendation of H. P. Smith), *like that of the three*; and so in v. 22. The text has arisen from a confusion of 3 and 1. Abishai and Benaiah (v. 22) had a reputation similar to that of the "Three," but not quite on a level with theirs (v. 19). These two seemingly had the next claim to promotion to the higher Order.

19. *Was he not . . . three?* The text seems to be corrupt, and should probably be corrected to *Behold he was more honourable than the Thirty* (cp. I. Chron. xi. 25).

The first three. The insertion of *first* here and in v. 23 seems unjustified, for there is not sufficient evidence for a second group (or Order) of three.

20. *The son of a valiant man.* Better (after the reading of the LXX.), *a valiant man*. For subsequent references to Benaiah see I. Kings i. 8 f., ii. 25-35, 46, iv. 4.

Kabzeel. A town in Judah (Joshua xv. 21).

The two sons of Ariel. The insertion of *sons of* is justified by the LXX.

A lion. Lions are not now found in Palestine, but there are many indications in the O.T. that they formerly existed there (Judges xiv. 5, I. Sam. xvii. 34, I. Kings xx. 36). Their chief haunt was the jungle fringing the Jordan (see Jer. xlix. 19, l. 44; Zech. xi. 3). Snow, of course, is unknown in the tropical valley traversed by the river; but it is not uncommon on the hills, and it may be assumed that the animal had strayed on to them and had been overtaken there by a sudden snowfall (cp. G. A. Smith, *HG.*, p. 65).

21. *A goodly man.* The Heb. text has an accidental error corrected in the mg.: I. Chron. xi. 23 reads *a man of stature*.

Had a spear. The LXX. adds a comparison, *like the timber of a ladder*, and I. Chron. xi. 23 (after I. Sam. xvii. 7), *like a weaver's beam*.

22 slew him with his own spear. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among
 23 the three mighty men. He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his 'guard.

¹ Or,
council.

vv. 24-39 *A list of the Thirty.*

24 **A**SAHEL the brother of Joab was one of the
 25 thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-
 26 lehem; Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the
 27 Harodite; Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh
 28 the Tekoite; Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai
 29 the Netophathite; Heleb the son of Baanah the
 30 Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the
 children of Benjamin; Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai

22. *Among.* This should be corrected to *like* (see on v. 18).

23. *The first three.* The word *first* should be omitted (see on v. 19).

His guard. Literally, *his servants* (as in I. xxii. 14): see viii. 18, xx. 23.

24. *Asahel.* The inclusion of Joab's youngest brother, slain by Abner before David became king of united Israel, shows that these Orders of chivalry were instituted early in David's reign.

Elhanan . . . of Beth-lehem. As Elhanan, the slayer of Goliath (xxi. 19), was also a Bethlehemite, it is possible that he is identical with the Elhanan here mentioned, in spite of the difference in the father's name (*Jair* and *Dodo*). One of these two names may be that of the grandfather (see on ix. 7).

25. *The Harodite.* Harod was perhaps at the foot of Mount Gilboa (see Hastings, *DB.* ii. p. 305).

Elikah. This name is omitted by the LXX.

26. *The Paltite.* *I.e.* (if the reading is correct) from Beth-pelet in Judah (*Joshua* xv. 27). But Helez in I. *Chron.* xi. 27 is called a Pelonite, and the Alexandrine MS. of the LXX. has ὁ Φελλωνεῖ here, whilst in I. *Chron.* xxvii. 10 he is described as an Ephraimite. Nothing, however, is known of a locality giving rise to the designation *Pelonite*.

The Tekoite. *I.e.* of Tekoa in Judah (see xiv. 2).

27. *The Anathothite.* Anathoth, the home of the prophet Jeremiah, was in Benjamin, 2 or 3 miles NE. of Jerusalem. It is the mod. *Anâta*.

Mebunnai. Probably an error for *Sibbecai* (due to confusion of *b* with *d* and of *d* with *j*); cp. xxi. 18. *Hushah* belonged to Judah (I. *Chron.* iv. 4.)

28. *The Ahohite.* See on v. 9.

29. *The Netophathite.* Netophah was probably on the border of Judah and Benjamin; cp. *Ezra* ii. 22.

Gibeah. See on xxi. 6.

30. *A Pirathonite.* Pirathon was in Ephraim (*Judges* xii. 15); probably the mod. *Ferata*, 6 miles SW. of Samaria.

	31	of the brooks of Gaash ; Abi-albon the Arbathite,
	32	Azmaveth the Barhumite ; Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
	33	the sons of Jashen, Jonathan ; Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite ;
	34	Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite ;
¹ Or, <i>Hezrai</i> .	35	¹ Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite ; Igal the
	36	son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite ;
	37	Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite,
² Another reading is, <i>armour-bearer</i> .	38	² armour-bearers to Joab the son of Zeruiah ; Ira
	39	the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite ; Uriah the Hittite : thirty and seven in all.

The brooks of Gaash. Better, *the torrent valleys of Gaash*, in Ephraim (Judges ii. 9).

31. *Abi-albon.* Probably a corruption of *Abibaal* ; cp. the corresponding *Abiel* in I. Chron. xi. 32. He was perhaps from Beth-arabah in Benjamin (Joshua xviii. 22).

The Barhumite. Probably an error for *the Bahurimite* (iii. 16).

32. *The Shaalbonite.* From Shaalabbin in Dan (Joshua xix. 42).

The sons of Jashen. There is some corruption (through dittography) here : the true text is probably *Jashen the Gunite* (after LXX. Luc.), the Gunites being a clan belonging to Naphtali (Num. xxvi. 48). I. Chron. xi. 34 has *Hashem the Gizonite*, a name not elsewhere occurring.

Jonathan. After this name LXX. Luc. has *νίός*, so that a word has been lost between this *v.* and the next, and the text should be, *Jonathan the son of Shammah the Hararite*. The father of Jonathan was seemingly the Shammah of *v.* 11, who, as one of the Three, could not be reckoned among the Thirty. But I. Chron. xi. 34 calls Jonathan *the son of Shage*.

33. *The Ararite.* Another form of *Hararite*. Harar is nowhere mentioned.

34. *The son of the Maacathite.* The text should probably be corrected to *a Maacathite*, perhaps of Abel-beth-maacah (xx. 14).

Eliam. Presumably the father of Bathsheba (xi. 3).

The Gilonite. See xv. 12.

35. *The Carmelite.* See on ii. 2.

The Arbite. Perhaps from Arab in Judah (Joshua xv. 52) ; but the reading of LXX. A, *ὁ Ἀραχέλης*, suggests *the Archite* (see xv. 32).

36. *The son of Nathan.* I. Chron. xi. 38, substituting Joel for Igal, calls him the brother of Nathan.

Of Zobah. See viii. 3. Igal, Zelek, Naharai and Uriah (mentioned below) were not native Israelites.

37. *The Beerothite.* See iv. 2. He was presumably a Hivite. Joab had more armourbearers than are here mentioned : see xviii. 15.

38. *The Ithrite.* A family or clan belonging to Kiriath-jearim (I. Chron. ii. 53). As LXX. Luc. has *ὁ Ἰεθαπαῖος*, it has been proposed to replace *the Ithrite* by *the Jattirite*. Jattir was a place in Judah (I. xxx. 27).

39. *Thirty and seven.* The sum of all the names in vv. 8-39 is thirty-six : possibly one has been lost (e.g. in *v.* 34 ; cp. I. Chron. xi. 36). Josephus gives the sum as thirty-eight.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

For the sake of comparison the names of the "mighty men" contained in the passages indicated (so far as they are parallel) are given here. The twelve names in I. *Chron.* xxvii. purport to be those of officers who held high command in turn, during the twelve months of the year, each for a month.

II. <i>Sam.</i> xxiii.	I. <i>Chron.</i> xi.	I. <i>Chron.</i> xxvii.
Joshebbasshebeth	Jashobeam.	Jashobeam.
Eleazar.	Eleazar.	Dodai.
Shammah		
Abishai.	Abishai.	
Benaiah.	Benaiah.	Benaiah.
Asahel.	Asahel.	Asahel.
Elhanan.	Elhanan.	
Shammah.	Shammoth.	Shamhuth.
Elika.		
Helez.	Helez.	Helez.
Ira.	Ira.	Ira.
Abiezer.	Abiezer.	Abiezer.
Mebunnai.	Sibbecai.	Sibbecai.
Zalmon.	Ilai.	
Maharai.	Maharai.	Maharai.
Heleb.	Heled.	Heldai.
Ittai.	Ithai.	
Benaiah.	Benaiah.	Benaiah.
Hiddai.	Hurai.	
Abi-albon (? Abibaal).	Abiel.	
Azmaveth.	Azmaveth.	
Eliahba.	Eliahba.	
(The sons of) Jashen.	(The sons of) Hashem.	
Jonathan.	Jonathan.	
Ahiam.	Ahiam.	
Eliphelet.	Eliphal.	
	Hepher.	
Eliam.	Ahijah.	
Hezro.	Hezro.	
Paarai.	Naarai.	
Igal.	Joel.	
Bani.	Mibhar.	
Zelek.	Zelek.	
Naharai.	Naharai.	
Ira.	Ira.	
Gareb.	Gareb.	
Uriah.	Uriah.	

In I. *Chron.* xi. sixteen additional names are given.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CENSUS.

As the episode here recorded is brought by the writer into connection with the incident related in **xxi. 1-14** (the pestilence that followed the census being represented as the second of two successive calamities), the chapter at one time must have been a continuation of **xxi. 1-14**. As the object of the census seems to have been the ascertainment of the military strength of the nation (*vv. 2, 9*), its date might appear best placed early in David's reign over united Israel, and prior to the campaigns narrated in *ch. viii*. But since the account presumes secure and tranquil frontiers, and the enumerators went some way in the direction of the distant Hittite city of Kadesh (see on *v. 6*), it is more probable that the census occurred *after* the Syrian wars.

vv. 1-9. The numbering of the people.

¹ See I.
Chr. xxi.

I¹ **AND** again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah.

1. *The anger of the LORD*, etc. The writer assumes that David's resolution to number the people was sinful; and to justify this view (since the mere wish to ascertain the sum of the population cannot by itself be regarded by us as sinful) some have traced the sin to some omitted duty in connection with the census, or to some wrong motive in undertaking it. Thus Josephus (*Ant. vii. 13, 1*) explains that David omitted the payment of the half-shekel *per* head enjoined in *Ex. xxx. 12-15*; whilst others have suggested that he was actuated by presumptuous pride in his military resources. But the law prescribing the half-shekel occurs in a section of the Pentateuch of post-Davidic date; and in the absence of anything pointing to a wrong motive, it is more reasonable to suppose that the sinfulness ascribed to his action was only an inference from the calamity which followed it and which required to be accounted for (cp. the inference in *John ix. 2*). The census, if preliminary to military conscription, would be highly unpopular, and would, in consequence, be the more readily regarded as the cause of the pestilence. It is more difficult to conjecture in what way it was believed to be offensive to Jehovah. Possibly to seek to know the number of His people was thought to be an undue prying into a secret which belonged to God alone, and so was an invasion of a Divine prerogative (cp. *Gen. ii. 17, iii. 5*).

He moved. The idea that evil impulses could originate with God was so repugnant to the Chronicler that in the parallel account (*I. Chron. xxi.*) he has altered the earlier writer's representation altogether, and describes Satan as David's instigator. But among the Hebrews in primitive times Jehovah was regarded as the primal source of all that happened, including the human resolutions from which those who formed them suffered (see *I. ii. 25, xix. 9; Ex. vii. 3; Judges ix. 23*). For N.T. teaching on the subject of temptation see *Rom. ix. 18, James i. 13*.

- 2 And the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now to and fro through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the sum
 3 of the people. And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it: but why doth my lord
 4 the king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king,
 5 to number the people of Israel. And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley ¹of
 6 Gad, and unto Jazer: then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came

¹ Or, toward.

2. *The captain of the host.* The original reading probably agreed with the text of v. 4, and to the captains of the host (note number ye). I. Chron. xxi. 2 also has *captains* (R.V. *princes*).

3. *And Joab said.* Joab was probably acquainted with the sentiments entertained by the people against the proposed military census, and he might fear that the taking of it would occasion a popular outbreak.

4. *From the presence of the king.* This is the required sense, and is the reading of LXX. *Luc.*, of the Syr., and of the Vulg.: the present Heb. text and the LXX. merely have *before the king*.

5. *And pitched, etc.* A military phrase such as this seems inappropriate, and the latter part of the sentence is mistranslated. LXX. *Luc.* has *καὶ ἤρξαντο*, and the true text is probably *and they began from Aroer and from the city which is in the midst of the valley towards Gad*. (There has been a confusion of *λ*, *ρ*, and *ι* with *ι*, *ρ* and *ι*). Obviously the writer is describing the point from which the enumerators commenced their work, which could be conveniently begun at the S. frontier (easily reached from Jerusalem) of the region E. of the Jordan. The *Aroer* intended here is probably the modern *Arair*, situated on the edge of the gorge of the Arnon (the modern *Wādī Mojīb*), the torrent valley here referred to, which was Israel's S. border (cp. *Num.* xxi. 24). The *city in the midst of the valley* (cp. *Deut.* ii. 36, *Joshua* xiii. 9) is supposed to be Ar (*Num.* xxi. 15). The *right side* of this would be the south (the Hebrews facing E. when describing the points of the compass), and beyond the frontiers.

Jazer. This, like Aroer, was a Gadite city (*Num.* xxxii. 34, 35) on the E. border between the territories of Israel and Ammon (see *Num.* xxi. 24, LXX. *Ἰαζήρ ὁρία ὑπὸν Ἀμμὼν ἐστίν*), and some ten miles SE. of Ramoth Gilead. It is supposed to be the modern *Sar*.

6. *Tahtim-hodshi.* A country or people of this name is quite unknown, and LXX. *Luc.* has *εἰς γῆν χειρτεμ Κάδης*, suggesting to *the land of the Hittites toward Kadesh*. Kadesh was a city on the Orontes, and the capital of the kingdom of the Hittites, a people probably of Mongolian

7 to Dan-jaan, and round about to Zidon, and came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites : and they went 8 out to the south o. Judah, at Beer-sheba. So when they had gone to and fro through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine 9 months and twenty days. And Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people unto the king : and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword : and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

race (see p. 36). But as Kadesh was a long distance away, H. P. Smith prefers Ewald's conjecture, *the land of the Hittites to Hermon*. In any case the northern limit reached by the enumerators is meant.

To Dan-jaan. The latter part of this name probably conceals in a corrupt form a second name. The LXX. has *ἐς Δὰν Ἐλδαν καὶ Οὐδὰν*, and the second and third of these look like alternative equivalents for *and Ijon* (a place mentioned with Dan in I. *Kings* xv. 20), an emendation proposed by Klostermann.

Round about to. The LXX. has *καὶ ἐκύκλωσαν*, and *went round to*.

Zidon. This, which lay N. of Tyre, claimed to be even older than the latter (which is itself styled by Herodotus *ἀρχαιότατη πόλις*), and is the only one of the two mentioned by Homer (*Od.* xv. 425). From Dan and from Ijon the enumerators passed along the Phœnician frontier which ran SW. from Lebanon to the sea.

7. *The strong hold of Tyre.* Probably an outpost on the Phœnician border S. of Tyre (cp. *Joshua* xix. 29).

The Hivites. These (whose name suggests that they lived in tent-villages) were a remnant of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, surviving chiefly in the N. of Palestine (*Joshua* xi. 3, *Judges* iii. 3) and in a few localities further S. like Shechem and Gibeon (see *Gen.* xxxiii. 18, xxxiv. 2, *Joshua* ix. 3, 7).

The south of Judah. Better, *the South of Judah*, this being the special name (Heb. *Negeb*) given to the parched region between Hebron and Kadesh Barnea (*Gen.* xii. 9, xx. 1; *Joshua* xv. 21). The enumerators, after reaching the border of Phœnicia, turned S. through W. Palestine, until they reached its southern frontier at Beer-sheba.

9. *The sum of the numbering.* Numbers in ancient histories are very untrustworthy, and the accuracy of these here given must be estimated by reference to the size and condition of the country. As the total (1,300,000) is that of the men fit for military service, the whole population could not be less than 6,000,000. This is a population almost as dense as that of Belgium (since the area of Palestine is only about 10,000 square miles), and much denser than that of Wales, which, whilst being in size rather more than seven-tenths of Palestine, yet, in spite of its including the crowded industrial district of Glamorganshire, contained at the last census (1911) not much more than 2,000,000 people. Hence the total here given can only be regarded as fanciful. The figures substituted by the Chronicler (*1. Chron.* xxi. 5) are even higher than those in the present passage, viz.,

vv. 10-17: *The alternative penalties.*

- 10 **A**ND David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: but now, O LORD, put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. And when David rose up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and speak unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.
- 11
- 12
- 13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise thee, and consider what answer I shall return to him
- 14 that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are ²great: and let me not
- 15 fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people

¹ Or, lay upon.

² Or, many.

1,100,000 men for Israel and 470,000 for Judah (excluding Levi and Benjamin). The separate figures given for Israel and Judah mark the survival of tribal divisions; and the omission of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) was probably dictated by the fear of provoking a tribe previously disaffected.

10. *After that.* This, the required meaning, is given by the LXX.: the Heb. has *afterwards*.

11. *Gad.* Previously mentioned in I. xxii. 5 as having been with David at Adullam. The Chronicler represents that he wrote a history of David's reign (I. Chron. xxix. 29).

12. *I offer thee.* Literally, *I lift upon thee* or (cp. mg.) *I lay upon thee*.

13. *Seven years.* The LXX. and I. Chron. xxi. 12 have *three years*, corresponding to the *three months* and *three days*. The Heb. here has perhaps been influenced by Gen. xli. 27. Famine, sword, and pestilence are three of the four sore judgments of God specified in Ezek. xiv. 21.

14. *Let us fall, etc.* These words of resigned faith are quoted in Ecclus. ii. 17, 18.

15. *So the LORD . . . appointed.* The LXX. here combines with a rendering of the Heb. text (in which *the time appointed* is translated by ὥρα ἀπώρου, "the hour of breakfast," perhaps noon) a rendering of a different text, *And David chose him the pestilence, and it was the days of wheat harvest* (cp. v. 18), *and the plague had begun among the people, and there died, etc.* This harmonizes with the representation that the plague was stayed before the three days had expired (v. 16), whereas the existing

¹ Or, *Ornah*.
In I. Chr.
xxi. 15,
Ornan.

from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand
16 men. And when the angel stretched out his hand
toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented
him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the
people, It is enough; now stay thine hand. And
the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-floor
17 of ¹Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto
the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the
people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have
done perversely: but these sheep, what have they
done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me,
and against my father's house.

vv. 18-25. *David's sacrifice on Araunah's threshing-floor.*

18 **A**ND Gad came that day to David, and said unto
him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the
19 threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And

text seems to imply that it lasted the specified period. If before the taking of the census there were the beginnings of an epidemic, the gathering of the people at various centres for the purpose of being enumerated would tend to spread it; but the number of those who died from it cannot be accepted with any confidence (see on v. 9).

16. *The angel.* Angels are similarly represented as the agents of destruction in *Ex.* xii. 23, *Ps.* lxxviii. 49, 50, *Is.* xxxvii. 36, *Acts* xii. 23, *Rev.* xiv. 17, etc.

Repented him. The context suggests that the motive of Jehovah's change of purpose was affection for Jerusalem. The conception of God in the Bible is often anthropopathic as well as anthropomorphic, and He is represented as changing His resolution, just as a man might do, under stress of feeling (cp. *I.* xv. 11, 35, *Gen.* vi. 6, 7, *Ex.* xxxii. 14, *Amos* vii. 3, *Joel* ii. 14, etc). On the other hand contrast *I.* xv. 29, *Num.* xxiii. 19. The remission of part of the predicted penalty here implied corresponds to the confidence placed by David in Jehovah's mercy (v. 14).

Araunah. The Heb. mg. vocalizes the name *Aravnah*, the LXX. has *Orna* (for *Ornah*), and *I. Chron.* xxi. 15 has *Ornan*. He apparently belonged to the former possessors of Jerusalem before its capture. Many of the native Jebusites may have been absorbed by their conquerors, and if they were connected by race with the Amorites this would help to account for Ezekiel's language (xvi. 3) about Jerusalem, *Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite*.

17. *These sheep.* The figure is correlative to that of *shepherd* as a metaphor for a ruler (see p. 104), and is especially appropriate in David's mouth, recalling his youth spent in the charge of his father's flocks.

18. *Go up.* *I.e.* to the elevated ground where a threshing-floor would naturally be.

Rear an altar. The purpose of the intended sacrifice was seemingly

David went up according to the saying of Gad, as the
 20 LORD commanded. And Araunah looked forth, and
 saw the king and his servants 'coming on toward him :
 and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before
 21 the king with his face to the ground. And Araunah
 said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his
 servant ? And David said, To buy the threshing-
 floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that
 22 the plague may be stayed from the people. And
 Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take
 and offer up what seemeth good unto him : behold,
 the oxen for the burnt offering, and the threshing
 instruments and the furniture of the oxen for the
 23 wood : ²all this, O king, doth Araunah give unto the
 king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD
 24 thy God accept thee. And the king said unto
 Araunah, Nay ; but I will verily buy it of thee
 at a price : neither will I offer burnt offerings unto
 the LORD my God which cost me nothing. So David
 bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty

¹ Or, *passing over.*

² Or, *all this did Araunah the king give &c.*

propitiatory (v. 21), so that there is a superficial discrepancy with v. 16, where the abating of the plague is represented as due to Jehovah's spontaneous compassion.

20. *Araunah looked forth.* The threshing-floor was presumably enclosed with a wall. In I. Chron. xxi. 20 Ornan (Araunah), who is described as threshing wheat, is said to have seen *the angel*, clearly an error for the similar word *the king*.

22. *The threshing instruments.* Equivalent to the Latin *tribula* and Greek *τριβόλα*, see p. 57.

The furniture of the oxen. I.e. the wooden yoke to which the necks of the oxen were fastened ; cp. I. Kings xix. 21.

23. *O king.* The Heb. admits of being rendered *All this doth Araunah the king give unto the king* ; and on the strength of this it has been supposed that Araunah was the former sovereign of the Jebusites (see Stanley, *Hist. Jewish Church* (1893), ii. p. 112). The LXX. and Vulg. omit the word for *O king* (or *the king*). But Driver observes " It is not in accordance with general Hebrew custom for a person in ordinary conversation to introduce his own name in the third person." Consequently it has been conjectured that *Araunah* is here a corruption of the Heb. for *my lord* (the error of transliteration would easily occur), and that a word has been lost before it, so that the true text is *All this doth the servant of my lord the king give unto the king*. The offer is one of oriental courtesy (cp. Gen. xxiii. 11), not meant seriously.

24. *Fifty shekels.* The total sum would be about £7 4s. 2d. (see p. 60). In I. Chron. xxi. 25 the sum paid is represented as 600 shekels of gold, i.e. about £1,230.

	25 shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.
--	---

25. *Built there . . . offerings.* The LXX. adds, "And Solomon added to the altar later, because it was small at first." This implies that on the site of Araunah's threshing-floor the temple of Solomon was afterwards built (cp. I. *Chron.* xxii. 1). The Mohammedan mosque called "The Dome of the Rock" now occupies the spot where David's altar, and afterwards the altar of burnt offering in the court of the Temple, were erected. By Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 13, § 4) the site is identified with the place where Abraham reared an altar for the sacrifice of Isaac.

The LORD was intreated. Cp. the similar phrase in xxi. 14.

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